

Disability Now



AQ6

32nd AGM reveals a hungry Society

Out with callipers – in with JAWS

For all its apparent wealth – and The Spastics Society spent £26.8 million in the financial year 1983/4 – it is probably meeting only 10 per cent of the needs of people with cerebral palsy in the UK.

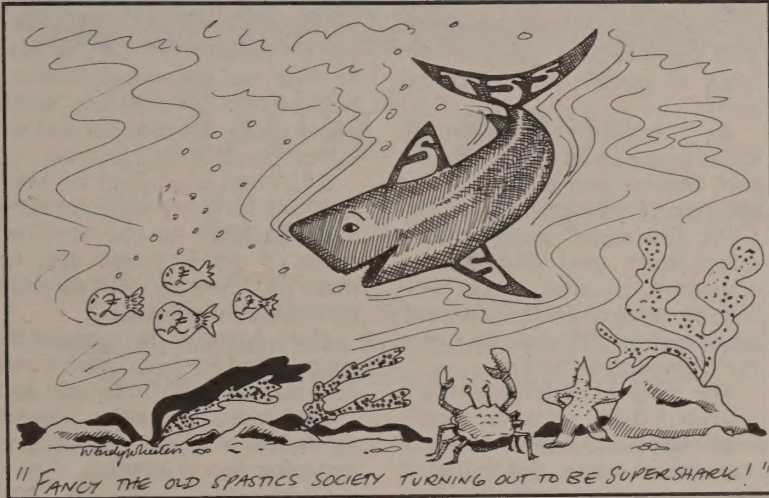
"We are a hungry Society," said Bill Huddleston, Hon Treasurer, at the Annual General Meeting last month. "We have the need; we have the skills, the knowledge and experience. What we want is the money to produce the action."

When one of the directors was asked how he would spend an extra, hypothetical, £10 million, he produced a list of high priority needs in only 10 seconds.

"If we are looking for a new image for the Society," said Bill Huddleston, "it is not a pathetic little girl in callipers with a begging bowl. It is more like JAWS, snapping up money and turning it rapidly into powerful movement and energy, into services and protection for cerebral palsied people of all ages."

Last year the Society spent over £4 million more than the year before. That was an increase, allowing for inflation, of 11.8 per cent. Most of it went on raising the standards of residential care and maintaining schools and centres in line with a new five-year plan.

It meant dipping into nearly £1.9 million of reserves. But Bill Huddleston felt "quite



comfortable" about the Society doing this.

Administrative costs had been contained within 3 per cent of total expenditure.

However, unrecoverable VAT had leaped to £507,000. "If everyone at the AGN (some 450) was engaged in house to house collections, it would take us all 120 evenings to collect the money to pay the VAT man," he said.

The two main areas of the Society's income had increased in the past year. Appeals, legacies, donations and other giving was up £818,000 to £10,681,000.

Fees and grants from central and local authorities for schools and centres had also increased by £973,000 to £13,430,000.

But these far from cover the cost of places. "When you compare the income in fees and

grants with the expenditure on schools and centres (£15,770,000) you might want to ponder how long we can or ought to subsidise the statutory authorities to that extent," said Bill Huddleston.

He noted that the Society's shops had had a good year, with profits up by £169,000 to £536,000.

For the first time he attempted to put a figure on two contributions which did not appear in the Society's Accounts. He estimated that over the year local affiliated groups had contributed £4 million worth of services, and that volunteers – on committees, in units and shops, collectors, fundraisers and Society staff – had contributed another £4 million.

For a more detailed breakdown of expenditure, see page 2.

Simon Crompton

We will remain leaders, pledges the Chairman

"We have always been seen as leaders in our field. We mean to stay there."

With these fighting words Mrs Joyce Smith completed her chairman's speech at The Spastics Society's AGM last month. She had been reviewing the events of the past year.

One of the Society's main tasks, she believed, was to communicate to the public, officials and others, the needs and priorities of the people who look to the Society for help.

To do this required a business-

like attitude to administrative economy and efficiency.

Yet the Society is dealing not with products but with people's lives.

"Just as we could not do without hard-headed, unsentimental organisational know-how, we could not do without the people who devote time, effort, money and a great deal of unselfish devotion to our work," said Mrs Smith.

In the restructuring of the Social Services Division and the review of residential services, Mrs Smith saw evidence of the Society's desire to respond to the needs and desires of people with cp and their families.

But this was not enough. "Wherever we look we can see urgent needs," she said, echoing Bill Huddleston, "and we have to concentrate our minds and resources to establish priorities."

She listed some of the needs. First she put supporting ageing parents; then attracting younger parents, providing for the under-5s, developing opportunities for independent living, improving future prospects for school-leavers and campaigning for post-16 education.

Continued on page 8



In-house model, Ann Hithersay

In fashion!

Next month the Society will be in fashion.

As part of the direct response trading programme, it will be advertising a cashmere suit and leisure wear in the national press backed up by a brochure mailing.

A proto-type suit in maroon wool gaberdine was shown at the AGM.

Apology

Due to production difficulties with the last issue, the printing of *Disability Now* was not up to its usual standard. The printers apologise for any inconvenience caused to readers.

Society is dismayed by survey proposals

A national survey of disabled people which omits children under 16 and disabled adults living in institutions cannot give an accurate or realistic picture of numbers or needs, warns The Spastics Society.

It was commenting last month on proposals put forward by the DHSS and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

A similar survey published in 1969 was criticised then for not including these two key groups.

"The criticisms are even more significant today," said John Cox, "and therefore our reaction to the OPCS proposals is one of dismay and disappointment."

Although the DHSS plans to conduct a survey of the two groups in the future, the Society is skeptical about how soon this will happen given the time it has taken to reach the present stage.

It believes the government cannot plan constructively for the future needs of disabled people without obtaining an accurate picture of the current numbers and needs of young disabled people.

"If disabled youngsters are excluded from the initial survey then the 'comprehensive up-to-date' estimate of adult disabled people will be out of date even

before the results are published," it warns.

Neither can the government plan effectively if it excludes disabled adults in institutions. And the delay would be a "nonsense" given the government's commitment to transferring these people, where possible, into the community.

The Society also criticises the method proposed for conducting the survey.

"We fail to see how a 'comprehensive' estimate can be made based on the evidence of a 'scatter' sample," it said.

New Code

The MSC has produced a new Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled People. It was launched by the Prime Minister on 14 November during the presentation of the annual "Fit for Work" awards to employers who have a proven record in the employment of disabled people.

Dr Eileen Fry, the Society's employment research officer, will assess the Code in next month's *Disability Now*.



**A Happy Christmas
to all our readers!**

from everyone on *Disability Now*

WESSEX MEDICAL EQUIPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

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Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

"They only ever see the chair, not the person sitting in it."



THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

It's not that people don't care, it's just that they don't think.

"As far as I'm concerned it's neither public nor convenient"



THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

It's not that people don't care, it's just that they don't think.

The two most recent posters published by The Spastics Society.

A stance to be applauded

We live in a country full of contradictions and hypocrisy. For example, Britain has a welfare state which is the envy of the world we are told, and yet every government in British history has tried to put the burden of care provision on the shoulders of groups with little money and a handful of overworked volunteers.

Charities are encouraged to beg for money in the streets and in the corridors of power. If they dare to challenge the actions of their paymasters they risk the threat of financial cuts becoming a reality and consequently the curtailing of their work.

The Spastics Society has always been subject to these constraints just like any other well meaning group. It has never faced up to this hypocrisy preferring to carry on doing its best and upsetting few.

However, in recent months something has happened which has not only surprised, but delighted us.

The poster campaign which the Society has undertaken took time to find its feet, but it is now a potentially strong force in pursuing a disabled persons' rights campaign. The posters do not just deal with the problem of access. The campaign has touched on discrimination in education and employment also.

Not only the posters, but *Disability Now* appears to be taking a stronger, tougher line. Could it be that The Spastics Society is becoming political? I hope so. The only way to make any long term changes affecting people with disabilities is by political means.

The Spastics Society has begun to take a stance which must be applauded. But it is only a partial change.

The financial constraints are such that the Society still allows posters of pathetic young children to be disseminated in the hope that a contribution will come from somebody who wishes to relieve their conscience for another year.

The Society still allows the obscene sight of models of little girls wearing callipers to sit outside shops begging for money.

Even within The Spastic Society there seems to be basic contradictions.

However, at last something is under way that calls for disabled peoples' rights.

Let's hope it does not stop here because just paying lip service to a disabled persons' rights campaign is worse than doing nothing at all. In the present economic and social climate this nettle is the most difficult one to

grasp. But grasp it we must.

Mark Todd

27 Spring Place
Bradford 7

No poster of a girl in callipers has been sent out from Park Crescent for the last 3 years. A decision to withdraw "child-form" collecting dolls was taken by the Executive Council in May this year - Editor.

Keep Naidex on Saturday

It was with interest that I read the report on Naidex 84 in *Disability Now* and was dismayed at the possibility that it may not be held on Saturdays in the future.

I am sure that there are many like me who would not be able to attend on a weekday as I have to depend on someone to take me there and transport is only available to me on Saturdays.

The lack of interest shown by the staff who manned the stands was amazing. This may be due to the obvious absence of the social service/health representatives and the obvious presence of disabled people.

In my opinion the exhibition was well attended on the Saturday.

Margaret Jones (Mrs)

61 Alibon Road
Dagenham
Essex RM10 8BY

Not all £12,000

I am concerned that more than a third of the report on Computer Technology at the Naidex Exhibition (*Disability Now*, November) should be devoted to a piece of equipment costing £12,000.

While it is interesting to hear of the capabilities of CEDRIC, I would like to remind your readers that computers can now be controlled by a wide variety of input devices both simple and elaborate, most of which cost below £250.

These include devices operated by eye movement (Twinkle Switches); by eye blink; by head (phonic wand) or hand (light pen) control of a light beam; by breaking a light beam or changing the light intensity (shadow switch); by touch (gentle or wild thrash) of finger, hand, arm, foot, knee, head, chin or tongue; or by breath control (suck-blow).

Maybe one day we will be able to control computers by our thought processes - but meanwhile let us encourage the widest and best use of the technology (and money!) available.

Janet Larcher

Computer Coordinator
The Spastics Society

The Spastics Society is a large business by any standards. Last year (1983-84) we spent £28.6 million, which was over £4 million more than in the previous year.

However, that does not mean that we are a rich society. Over the last few years we have spent more than we have received and had to use some of our investments to make up the deficit.

A society such as ours with a contract of care for hundreds of people with cerebral palsy must ensure that it can continue to provide that care as a going concern. We must not dip too deeply into the investments which protect that future operation.

Of the £28.6 million some £22.5 million was spent on services to people with cerebral palsy.

£17.7 million of that went on the running costs of our schools and centres and £860,000 on their development and improvement. This major portion of our expenditure provided special education, training, work, welfare, parent relief and residential care for people of all ages throughout the country.

The authorities for whom we provided these services contributed some £13.4 million as fees and grants and the deficit had to be provided from our own fundraising efforts.

While there is so much pioneering work for us to do which the authorities have not yet a statutory duty to provide, and while there are so many unmet needs identified throughout the country, I wonder how long we can or ought to subsidise their statutory obligations to that extent.

Over the years The Spastics Society has built up a regional network of social workers and regional staff who are able to

ALACs and Disability Now

I was surprised to read the letter from John D Adams and Dr P A Isherwood concerning ALACs. Could they be talking about the same place as me? I concluded that they weren't.

I come under the jurisdiction of the ALAC in Selly Oak (Birmingham) and I must say that I have nothing but praise for the staff there.

My needs are concerned with wheelchairs and - within the designs available - my needs are more than adequately met. The assessment officers are always ready to listen to a patient's own thoughts in respect of his/her needs.

I do agree that the current range of wheelchairs is hardly likely to gain much favour with those that actually have to use them all day! The need for new, purpose-built and designed wheelchairs is long overdue but I fail to see that blaming the ALAC staff is in any way a solution to the problem.

I enjoy reading *Disability Now* since it covers so many different subjects (warts and all!) that are of interest to most if not all types of disability, and to many professions that are concerned with our care and well-being.

Christopher C Moore

24 Sally Ward Drive
Walsall Wood
West Midlands WS9 9JZ

Christian Community

I have been disabled since birth with a form of Muscular Dystrophy, though I have always lived a very active life.

For some time I have felt

HON TREASURER

How The Society spent £26.8 million

solve problems and provide support and guidance at a local level. Some £1.1 million was spent on those services with a further £892,000 going to augment the services provided by affiliated groups and societies and other assorted charities.

The Spastics Society is committed to research on the prevention and alleviation of cerebral palsy. £490,000 was spent on medical, educational and social research during the year.

£727,000 was spent on welfare and employment services and £117,000 on the development of services and aids to make life less restricted for people with cerebral palsy.

The Society is constantly approached for help, advice and information from individuals and organisations and spent £536,000 on publications, films and information services.

Of the remaining £6.1 million, the most substantial cost was the £3 million for national and regional appeals - which has not increased in real terms over the year.

The shops cost £1.9 million but generated £536,000 of net profit.

Central administration, including the finance division costs, accounted for £765,000, which is still below 3 per cent of total expenditure.

But unfortunately the unrecoverable VAT levied on our ser-

called to establish an Ecumenical Christian Community which would welcome members who have disabilities.

Should any of your readers require further information, I shall be pleased to hear from them. A stamp would be appreciated.

Thelma Bailey (Miss)

3 Orchard Close
Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0BT

Help, please

I am writing to ask whether your readers could assist us with a study we are undertaking of the health and social needs of physically handicapped young adults.

The study is being carried out by ourselves through St Mary's Hospital Medical School, Paddington, London, and is sponsored by The Spastics Society.

We are interested in contacting anyone with a physical handicap who is aged 16-26 and living either in the W2, W9, W10 or W11 London postal districts, or in the Wycombe area of South Buckinghamshire (e.g. Bledlow, Bradenham, Chepping, Ellesborough, Fanley, Fingest, Hambleton, The Hampdens, Hedsor, Hughenden, Ilbstone, Lacey Green, The Marlowes, Medmenham, Princes Risborough, Radnage, Stokenchurch, Turville, High Wycombe, West Wycombe, or Woodburn).

Physically handicapped young adults meeting the age and address criteria who would be willing to take part in our research should contact me at the address below.

Dr Andrew P. Thomas

Community Paediatric Research Unit
St Mary's Hospital Medical School
5A Netherhall Gardens
London NW3 5RN



Bill Huddleston

vices by the Government increased by 12 per cent to £507,000 in spite of our constant lobbying along with other charities.

I would like to encourage readers to get hold of a copy of our Annual Report and Accounts which provide much more background information to the financial data than is possible in this column.

The Annual Accounts are prepared with great care by our finance division, checked by our internal auditors and independently verified by external auditors Touche Ross & Co. who have a high reputation in the accounting world.

As a large charity we must give an account of the money which is donated directly or indirectly by the public or provided by statutory bodies. In this way we can protect our reputation from those who would snipe at the integrity of charities and assure the donors and potential donors that we are a responsible and caring society.

A copy of the Annual Report and Accounts 1983/84 is available from the Society's Information Officer, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.



Spastics no entry
Seen on a door at a local group day centre - Nigel Smith

... having only recently joined this worthy community I had little idea just how much afflicted some of these poor souls can be. *Tendring District Year Book 1984 - Alan Durant*

Thumbs up from brave Doran, the human cabbage who defied doctors and can now walk, talk, read and write.

Evening Argus, Brighton, 24 October - Simon Crompton

We are below our quota of employment of disabled people and the company wishes to carry out an exercise to get the quota filled. If any member of staff who is disabled feels that perhaps they could have been registered as disabled but did not do so, such registration would be of assistance to the company and perhaps they could contact Personnel Department. Such information, will, of course, be treated in the strictest confidence. *Staff notice at AGB Publications, Ruislip, Middx.*

Please send your contributions (not forgetting the source and your name) to Watch It! Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

There seems to be much public discussion nowadays about the role and responsibilities of the voluntary sector in our society. How effectively is the partnership between the charity sector and the state meeting welfare needs? Is government support for charity an efficient way of doing things?

These issues are political and increasingly, I think, the role of voluntary organisations is a subject of interest to politicians of all persuasions.

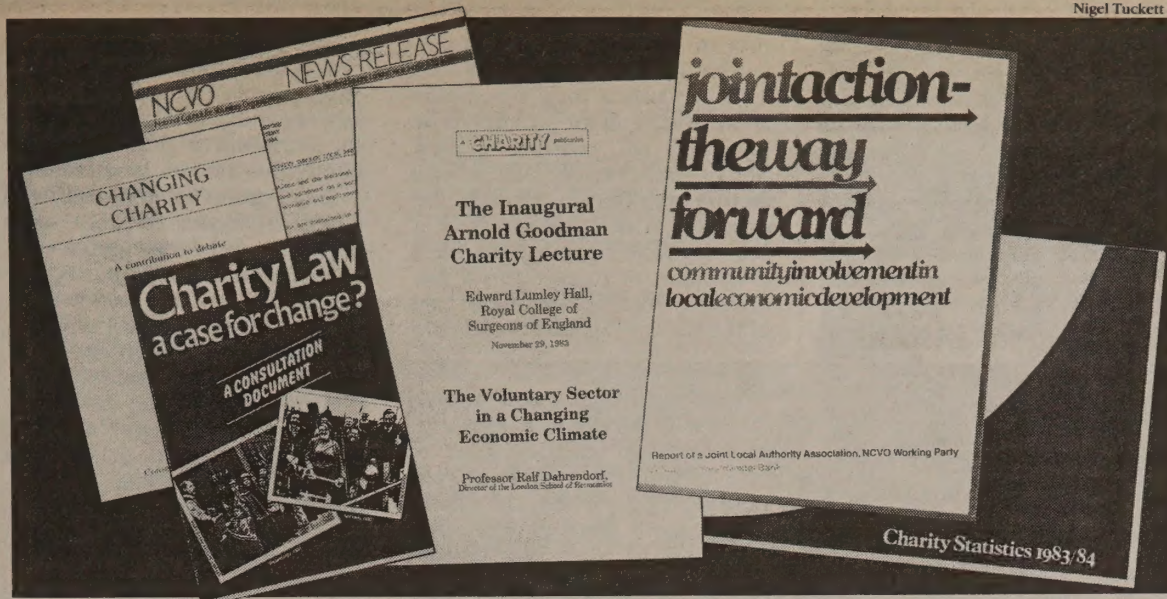
Speaking to the Charities Aid Foundation conference in October, the SDP leader, Dr David Owen, recommended "a political and philosophical reappraisal of the role of the volunteer, of the voluntary sector, of charity in Britain..." He called for a Royal Commission to establish what he described as "political ground rules" for relating charitable to state activity.

In a collection of articles recently published by the Conservative Political Centre on voluntary organisations in modern society, Alan Howarth MP highlights the unpleasant fact that the demand for services in health, social security and education is outstripping the growth of available resources.

He contrasts the disappointing performances of "professionalised", "corporate" government welfare departments with charities which are "motivated to meet demand, working from the bottom up rather than the top down, animated by the enthusiasm of volunteers rather than by directive."

He calls for a welfare strategy developed in partnership with the voluntary sector where charities have a voice in policy making. And he points out that the labour-intensive individual touch which adds so much to services for old people, disabled people or children with special needs is more likely to come from voluntary organisations than a cash-strapped, cut back public sector.

Further support for the pluralist approach to service provision comes from Roger Freeman MP in the same pamphlet. Charities are closer to the recipient, he says, and each provides a specialist service which may be its *raison d'être* but for the local



Don't pass the buck!

The government is simultaneously praising voluntary action and threatening its development argues Andrew Ross, Marketing Director

authority is very much a minority service.

It is easier to talk about commitment to voluntary action than to practise it.

Certainly the government has made some effort to support voluntary organisations. Sir George Young MP, Under-Secretary at the Department of the Environment, reminded the CAF conference in October that the Government has introduced several useful tax concessions (although plenty more are needed, including VAT relief and some incentives for more company giving). Voluntary organisations have played a full part in the Urban Programme and in various MSC schemes. Overall, central Government grants to the voluntary sector increased by 62 per cent to some £150 million between 1979 and 1983.

Sir George seemed optimistic about the future. "We aim to make the partnership between the statutory and voluntary services more effective and fruitful," he said. "The fact that the

Government funding for the voluntary sector has increased... is a sign of its strength and not of weakness or dependence on Government."

Yet to anyone working in the voluntary sector there is a noticeable inconsistency between that statement and another which he made later in his speech.

"It is clear that there is a pressing need for voluntary bodies to tap new sources of support in the community," he said. "It is not only unrealistic to expect additional substantial funding from Government, but also unwise."

A fortnight later, his senior colleague at the DoE, Patrick Jenkin MP, was even more blunt. Speaking to the annual conference of the NCVO, he warned that "voluntary bodies will be wise to reflect on the independence which they may be losing if they come to look no further than the public purse for this income."

Mr Jenkin cited the current

edition of CAF's *Charity Statistics* as evidence that charities are succumbing to the "dangers" of increased state funding whilst experiencing a parallel fall in private donations. In the September issue of *Disability Now* I expressed doubts about these alleged trends. Certainly our experience at The Spastics Society does not bear out the supposed fall in private giving.

These ministerial comments show how the Government is thinking, coloured perhaps by the impact which the planned abolition of 6 Metropolitan County Councils and the rate-capping of 18 local authorities must have on voluntary organisations.

True, the Government has published alternative proposals for "collective" funding of voluntary projects by boroughs or districts in the metropolitan areas; for transitional assistance from central Government, and increased direct funding by individual local authorities. But the NCVO has described these prop-



osals as either too limited or unworkable, or both.

It is all very well for Mr Jenkin to say that there is "plenty of private money to be tapped" and that "voluntary organisations should look to their traditional sources of support."

The Spastics Society is now a large and well established provider of services with a highly developed fund raising network. But we were small once.

Today's environment is far more competitive. What will happen to thousands of small local charities which meet pressing needs but cannot easily build up an organisation to attract resources and help transfer them from those who can afford to those who cannot? What about voluntary efforts to help those who are drug addicted or alcoholic?

What will happen to local initiatives in the arts, projects with the ethnic minorities and women's self help groups? These have sprung up and are often dependent on a local authority or GLC grant for their early strength.

Many small charities are likely to find themselves beyond the pale.

Perhaps a Royal Commission is needed to redraw the line between state and voluntary responsibility. But as Professor Ralf Dahrendorf of the London School of Economics said earlier this year, "There must always be a tension between government action and voluntary action."

That essential tension will make it very hard, I think, to define the boundaries of responsibility. Dr Owen's Commission might help to ease tensions but would it make a lasting impact?

In the House of Lords there have been calls once again for the appointment of a Minister responsible for coordinating relations between government and the voluntary sector. I think that the diversity of charitable activity would make this an impossible job.

One of the great strengths of the voluntary sector is its freedom of movement: as new needs arise, it will act to meet them.

That freedom is worth preserving, but it will depend on government support. The "fruitful partnership" must continue.



HOUSE OF LORDS

Minister for the voluntary sector

Does the existing relationship between voluntary organisations and governmental and other bodies most effectively satisfy the needs of the community at large?

This was the subject of the "Welfare Provision: Co-ordination" debate on 22 October.

Baroness Ewart-Biggs (Labour) said that a problem facing voluntary and charitable welfare organisations was that the more effective they become in serving the needs of society, the more clients they get. Consequently, their costs escalate, while the

DHSS grant often remains unchanged. They then have to turn more and more to the public and grapple with the time consuming and highly specialised task of fund raising rather than responding to the real needs of their client groups.

The voluntary sector obviously needed more money, the Baroness said, and she suggested that acceptable minimum standards of provision in health, housing, education, etc, should be established and that the Government should meet the obligation of providing them.

Although the Government did not want the voluntary sector impeded by rate capping, it had not put that wish into effect, said Baroness Ewart-Biggs. At a time when voluntary organisations are shown to be making a really

valuable contribution, they should be given enough assurance of long-term support to enable them to plan and build up professional staff.

The Baroness suggested that there should be a junior minister responsible for the co-ordination of the work of the voluntary sector, an idea later supported by other speakers.

Many members contributed to the 2 hour debate and many points were raised including VAT reform for charities and the possible effect of the proposed abolition of the GLC and MCCs on voluntary organisations.

Lord Glenarthur, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, said that the Government's policy had been to encourage greater co-operation between the statutory and voluntary sector. Its commitment was shown in an additional £24 million of aid over 4 years to organisations in the health and personal social services field.

He also drew attention to the £6 million provided for an under-5s initiative and £1 million on a £1 for £1 basis for voluntary bodies to help with the costs of "care in the community" projects.

The Secretary of State for Social Services, Norman Fowler,

had already announced an extra £10.5 million to enable volunteers, families, neighbours and others to provide informal care, he said.

As for an individual Minister being responsible for co-ordinating the Government's interest in voluntary services, Lord Glenarthur pointed out that David Waddington, Minister of State for Home Affairs, holds that responsibility.

On the abolition of the GLC and MCCs, Lord Glenarthur said that the Government is planning to provide transitional support of £5 million a year for 4 years to meet 75 per cent of the cost of a grant made by an individual borough or district council.

A recent consultation paper included proposals for helping local authorities to take on the increased financial responsibility for supporting the voluntary sector, he said.

On the effect of rate capping on voluntary organisations, Lord Glenarthur pointed to a provision in the Rates Act which allows a local authority to apply for its funding for charities to be considered as a ground for re-determining its expenditure level. No such application had been made, he said.

No comment was forthcoming, however, on the question of

VAT relief for charities or on the suggestion of minimum standards of provision.

The right to buy an adapted home

On 29 October, Baroness Lane-Fox (Conservative) asked the Government whether it will review regulations in the House and Building Control Act 1984 which in effect "removes the right to buy" from those disabled people whose homes have been extensively adapted to meet their special needs.

Lord Skelmersdale, for the Government, pointed out that an extensive debate on the rules affecting housing for disabled people had taken place during the passage of the Bill which became an Act only 2 months ago.

He felt, therefore, that it was too soon to promise a review of the new provisions, but the Government would monitor the operation of the Act.

Baroness Lane-Fox thought this aspect of the regulations discriminated against the most severely handicapped people.

Lord Skelmersdale said that in fact the Act does not remove the right to buy from disabled people whose homes have been

Continued on page 5

REPORTS

MEIU International

Meeting

Putting prevention first

These meetings of the International Study Group on Child Neurology and Cerebral Palsy are organised alternate years.

This time the meeting took place at Trinity College, Cambridge from 24 to 28 September. The subject under study was "Mechanisms involved in the production of neurological handicap in the prenatal and perinatal periods".

The 70 participants included research workers from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, and all but two or three participants stayed for the whole meeting which lasted 3½ days.

It was clear that much of the best quality work that is occurring in the field of handicap is on prevention and mechanisms of causation rather than management of the handicapped person.

The papers presented were of high quality and indicate the direction in which most scientific energy is going at present.

In general, genetics, intrauterine development, obstetric management and the acquisition of handicap are becoming very much closer and dialogue is now very important between these disciplines.

The basic scientists presented work on the ability of the brain to regenerate and on its immunological and chemical maturation; work which is clearly advancing and may soon make contact with those involved in the prevention and amelioration of handicap.

The very detailed work on the mechanisms of neural tube defects performed by Dr Mary Seller at the Paediatric Research Unit in London, and work from Canada on the causes of joint deformity, indicate the need for pooling information.

Maternal thyroid deficiency can have an important effect on the foetal brain. In some communities, the foetal alcohol syndrome (the result of the mother consuming too much alcohol) is an important cause of handicap.

Attempts to reduce handicap

by immunisation against intrauterine infection are well known, but evidence was presented to show how in certain infections, particularly cytomegalovirus, this is unlikely to have a major effect.

The very major advances in ultrasound imaging of the brain, both prenatally and perinatally, are giving much more evidence about the final mechanisms

in very low birth weight infants and hearing loss.

There was a long discussion about the need for parents to be informed on possible causes. They should be told that several factors are often involved in the production of handicap. But it seems counter-productive for a discussion of causes to be followed by legal action on the part of the parents against those who



The participants at Trinity College, Cambridge. Brian Neville is on the extreme right, front row.

which produce cerebral palsy. It looks as though the periventricular brain haemorrhage which has been widely regarded as a major cause is not as important as the more widespread lack of blood supply to the brain which causes a pathological condition called periventricular leukomalacia.

The present methods of assessing asphyxia, and particularly the newborn apgar score, are missing babies who have suffered a potentially damaging intrauterine event.

A new method of assessing brain metabolism using nuclear magnetic resonance was presented which was able to show startling abnormal results in babies who had suffered brain damage.

Reviews by paediatricians and paediatric neurologists from Scandinavia, the United Kingdom and Canada indicated the continuing important contribution of perinatal events to the production of cerebral palsy, but obstetricians warned against a simplistic interpretation of this data.

Overwhelmingly, the most important public health measure emerging from that discussion was the need for good research on the prevention of premature labour.

Two papers showed very clearly the strong association between moderate levels of jaun-

are seen to have contributed to the event, particularly if the purpose of giving the information to parents is to try to come to a conclusion about future genetic risk.

The members of the Society's advisory committees and the officers of the Society who attended the meeting found it very useful, not only for hearing the papers but for renewing friendships with people from all over the world who share the same professional interests.

Brian Neville
Medical Education
and Information Unit

Distech Conference Communication – a resource problem

The Distech Communications Conference organised by The Spastics Society and the University of Surrey took place at the University on 17 November. There were 72 delegates and the conference was over-subscribed.

In general, the day was used effectively as both a teaching session and an information exchange between delegates and presenters.

The main topic was the provision of communication assistance to the young. There are an estimated 200,000 non-vocal communicators in the UK of which only a small number are known and even fewer are being helped – mainly because of a lack of resources.

All 4 presenters in the morning session stressed the need for thorough assessment before providing any communication aid.

Sandy Winyard, a speech therapist from the only communication assessment centre for children, the Wolfson Centre in London, described in useful detail the procedures the centre uses to assess children's needs.

Pru Fuller from Aids to Communication in Education described 4 children whose needs in the classroom illustrated the problems of non-vocal communicating children and the assistance they need.

Judy Chisholm from White Lodge Centre in Surrey described ably her work of assessing and motivating these children.

Andrew Brown from the Chailey Heritage Centre gave an overview of his work in providing appropriate interfacing aids, which ranged from simple communication boards to sophisticated micro-computer based equipment. He seemed to favour less sophisticated interfaces wherever possible as they were likely to be more reliable.

The afternoon began with a practical demonstration which gave people an opportunity to assess (and play with!) some of the imaginative aids which had been described in the morning.

Small group sessions followed where delegates tried to solve problems and exchanged ideas.

Janet Larcher, Computing Co-ordinator at White Lodge Centre, spent some time providing delegates with sources of information and equipment.

Summing up the day, Tony Cartright of Surrey University brought out the crucial element in the effective use of communication aids: good seating, motivation, identifying the most consistent and reliable response, and seeking information. He said that a good communication aid should "let the teacher do the teaching and the aid do the enabling."

All the contributions at the conference were of a high quality and provided inspiration to those with little knowledge of the field and extra information to those who had some knowledge already.

The delegates seemed to be saying that they needed more opportunity to communicate with each other.

Ken Smith
Computer Administrative
Officer,
North East Region

Conductive Education International Seminar

New sense of unity in Budapest



Mother, baby and conductor at Budapest.

The international seminar held in October was a long awaited event. It was organised jointly by the Institute for Conductive Education in Budapest and the International Cerebral Palsy Society (UK).

Some participants came a long way, such as Professor Murai who talked about his Conductive Education Unit, the Warashibe Institute, in Japan. But most were Europeans.

There were three contributors from England. Carol Oviatt Ham of The Spastics Society's Rutland House School in Nottingham, gave an impressive account of the progress of some of the pupils. Margaret Baker, head of the Society's Conductive Education Unit at Ingfield Manor School near Horsham gave a moving as well as a sharp paper about her experience of conductive education and the develop-



Lillemor Jernqvist in Budapest.

ment of the unit. And I presented some results from my studies on rhythmical intention. Information was distributed about the work of the British Conductive Education Interest Group.

We saw the new Institute and College which is near completion; an impressive building offering excellent facilities not only for children and staff but for courses and conferences.

We also saw children at work, though it took an experienced eye to detect how severely handicapped these well functioning children actually were. Little explanation was given during the session which was a shame as many spectators did not appreciate the goals being aimed for. For example, when the task series was followed by a play activity – bathing a doll or baking – it seemed to most of us that the children were just playing and a nice way to end the morning. In fact they were using skills they had previously practised – stretching the arms, fixing one hand while moving the other, etc.

I was particularly impressed by a group of adults with Parkinson's Disease who were achieving excellent functional skills. They spoke freely about their experience of conductive education and how they had been able to travel again without help or go back to teaching.

Training was discussed on several occasions and at some length. We hope that the sense of unity which the seminar has brought into being will encourage future training and exchanges between Ingfield School and the Institute.

Lillemor Jernqvist
Senior Educational Psychologist
The Spastics Society

★Persuaded by an enthusiastic report from British psychologists who visited Budapest, Birmingham City Council has given the go ahead for practical trials of conductive education to take place in Birmingham.

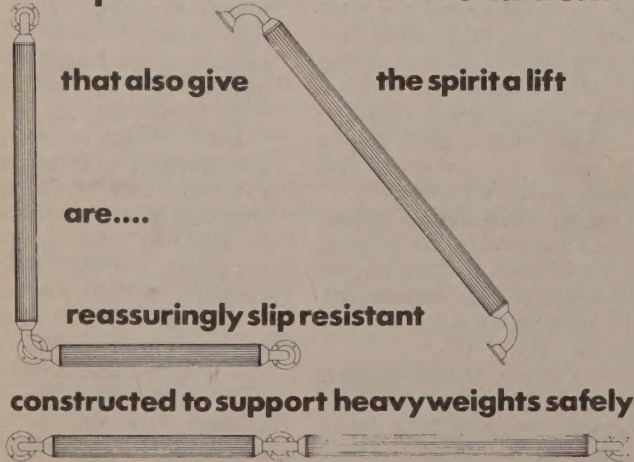
There will be two groups of adults and 2 of young children with motor disabilities.

IDC sponsorship

The report last month on the Independent Development Council Conference omitted to say that The Spastics Society is one of the sponsors of the IDC.

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Belfast Newsletter



Integrated housing on Belfast's "peace line". The Lord Mayor of Belfast meets Mr and Mrs Mayner outside their new home, one of 56 dwellings built between the Falls Road and the Shankill Road. Councillor Alfie Ferguson officially opened Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd's Conway Street development on 30 October, which includes 15 specialised wheelchair bungalows interspersed with 37 family houses and 4 pensioner's bungalows. Habinteg chairman, Alex Moira, was also present. There is full wheelchair access throughout the development, residential background support and a warden call system. Habinteg aims to enable disabled people to realise a life of independence and involvement within a normal environment. This is Habinteg Ulster's 6th scheme, and forms a major part of the lower Shankill area redevelopment.

Good for the girls!

Beaumont Products in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, has opened its doors to the residents of the surrounding housing estate - and a new atmosphere of mutual support is breaking down barriers between able-bodied and disabled people.

Many children from the Jacketts Field Estate now visit the workshop to talk to the workers, and the residents association holds meetings and social events there.

Two eleven-year-old girls from the estate, Cindy Evans and Nadine Sorrell, first came to look around the workshop out of curiosity and decided on the spot to do a sponsored walk in aid of the social club. They made £66 in August.

Then in their summer holidays they came and helped the workers several days a week.

"There's a spirit at Abbots Langley that I've never encountered before," says Joe Valerio, Beaumont Works Manager.

"There's an acceptance of one another - we have no taboo questions and you don't have to make a week's booking to come along. The workforce has been totally swept along in this new spirit."

Less than 2 years ago the residents of the estate were hardly aware of the existence of the

works, which is tucked away in a corner.

"There was a lot of hooliganism around the unit," says Joe Valerio, "and children using the adjacent play area smashed some windows."

Then David Edwards, the residents' association chairman, approached Joe Valerio about using the hall of the industrial unit because the estate has hardly any facilities of its own.

Since then the residents have held their meetings, jumble sales children's parties and pensioners' parties there, donating any money they make.

And now they keep an eye on the unit as part of their neighbourhood watch scheme. In this knowledge, Beaumont has been able to build a greenhouse for their trainee gardeners.

"With people buying up their council houses, we appreciate that the unit should look clean and fit in," says Joe Valerio. "So we've been working on that for the last 18 months."

"The first impression of most people who have visited us has been 'I never imagined it would be like that.'"

"We might as well try and help each other out if we can," says David Edwards of the residents' association. "We've made it a much closer community."

Hemel Hempstead Express



Cindy Evans (right) and Nadine Sorrell give Joe Valerio the £66 they raised, watched by the Abbots Langley workers.

county councils.

"A Bill will be introduced to improve the occupational pension rights of people who leave schemes before pensionable age and to ensure that members are able to obtain information about their schemes.

"My Government will continue to develop policies to raise educational standards."

HOUSE OF COMMONS

More resources for neonatal care?

In answer to a written question from Tim Wood MP on 23 October, Norman Fowler announced the publication of the Government's reply to the Social Services Committee's Third Report on *Perinatal and Neonatal Mortality*.

The Government, he said, welcomed the substantial fall in perinatal mortality - from 14.6 perinatal deaths per 1,000 in England in 1979 to 10.3 in 1983.

The Social Services Committee, chaired by Mrs Renee Short MP, reported that differences in mortality rates remain between regions and social classes. It argues for additional resources to improve provision for neonatal intensive care and all maternity services in areas of social deprivation.

The Government, it seems, is not convinced that extra cash for the maternity and neonatal services is the answer. It is for health authorities to consider the Committee's recommendations in the light of their local circumstances, said Mr Fowler.

Alleged discrimination

In a Parliamentary Question to Tony Newton, Secretary of State for Social Services on 12 November Bob Wareing asked how many cases of alleged discrimination against disabled people had been received by the Minister in the last year; what was the nature of the investigations undertaken into these cases; and what was the outcome.

Tony Newton said that 8 cases had been referred with sufficient evidence to be investigated. The Department was still awaiting confirmation that the individual concerned in one case wished inquiries to be made on her behalf. In the remaining 7 cases officials had made enquiries and sought the comments of the other parties involved.

3 cases are still under consideration.

Of the 4 concluded cases, 1 involved a genuine problem of access; 1 concerned an employer's judgement that the complainant's disability rendered her unsuitable for the appointment on safety grounds; 1 concerned a management judgement that an employee's overall performance was inadequate for promotion purposes, even after taking account of the limitation imposed by disability; and the last concerned the rules of membership of a trade federation which are applicable to all candidates.

Tony Newton said that in his judgement none of these cases revealed evidence of unjustified discrimination.

Sharron Saint Michael



David Bellamy shelters under Brena Williamson's brolly after presenting the cheque to Dawn Pearce from the Cedars School. Philip Dyke (left) is also from the Cedars School, and Colin Morris (right) lives locally and goes to Lord Mayor Treloar College.

The call of the wild

Extrovert botanist David Bellamy visited an overgrown area of the New Forest on 24 October and presented a cheque for £6,500 which will transform it into a nature reserve for disabled people.

The 4 acre site near Hythe, owned by the Forestry Commission, includes deciduous woodland, moorland and bogland.

The grant from the Conservation Foundation will fund access paths designed by civil engineers, clearance and replanting work supervised by the Forestry Commission, signposting and a parking area.

The reserve is the brainchild of Brena Williamson, a retired community physiotherapist in the New Forest with an interest

in wildlife. She started the project in 1983.

"So many of us take access to nature for granted," she says. "It's shocking more hasn't been done for disabled people in this field before."

The Cedars School for Physically Disabled Children in Southampton has adopted their own area of woodland. Several disabled people are already involved in construction work, and 2 disabled birdwatchers are carrying out a 2-year survey of the bird life.

If you have any suggestions, or need more information, contact Mrs Brena Williamson, 1 Forest Front, Butts Ash, Hythe Hants. Tel: (0703) 842716.

Remember Jackie's transfer aid?

Jackie Garrett's invention to help disabled people transfer from a wheelchair to a car seat is going into production by February.

The aid won Jackie the Schools Design Prize in 1983 and was featured in the January issue of *Disability Now*. Since then Jackie and *DN* have been inundated with enquiries.

With the help of the Research Unit for the Handicapped at Warley Hospital, which is now testing prototypes, Jackie has redeveloped the aid.

Now it is made of moulded

plastic rather than steel. And rather than forming one arm of a wheelchair that can be pivoted round to form a sliding board, the unit is now simply bolted onto the side of the wheelchair.

"It's very neat," says Jackie. "It also doubles up as a table on the lap."

"No-one's more pleased that it's going into production than I am," she says.

For more information, contact Gerry Dale, Research Unit for the Handicapped, Warley Hospital, Brentwood, Essex. Tel: (0277) 218465.

MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF LORDS

Continued from page 3

extensively adapted because that right did not exist before the Act.

Baroness Birk (Labour) pointed out that the vast majority of houses adapted for disabled people have now come under the right to buy provision and that it is only a small minority of those houses which have been extensively and therefore expensively adapted that are exempt. 7.5 square metres and above is one criterion for defining an "extensive adaptation". Therefore people who need large equipment, such as an iron lung, do not have the right to buy.

Lord Skelmersdale replied that the Government could see no reason why, once the iron lung was removed from the premises, the house should not revert to normal housing stock.

The Queen's speech

The main points from the Queen's Speech on 6 November which are of concern to disabled people are as follows:

"Firm control of public spending is maintained.

"A Bill will be introduced to increase competition in the provision of local bus services in Great Britain and to transfer to the private sector the operations of the National Bus Company.

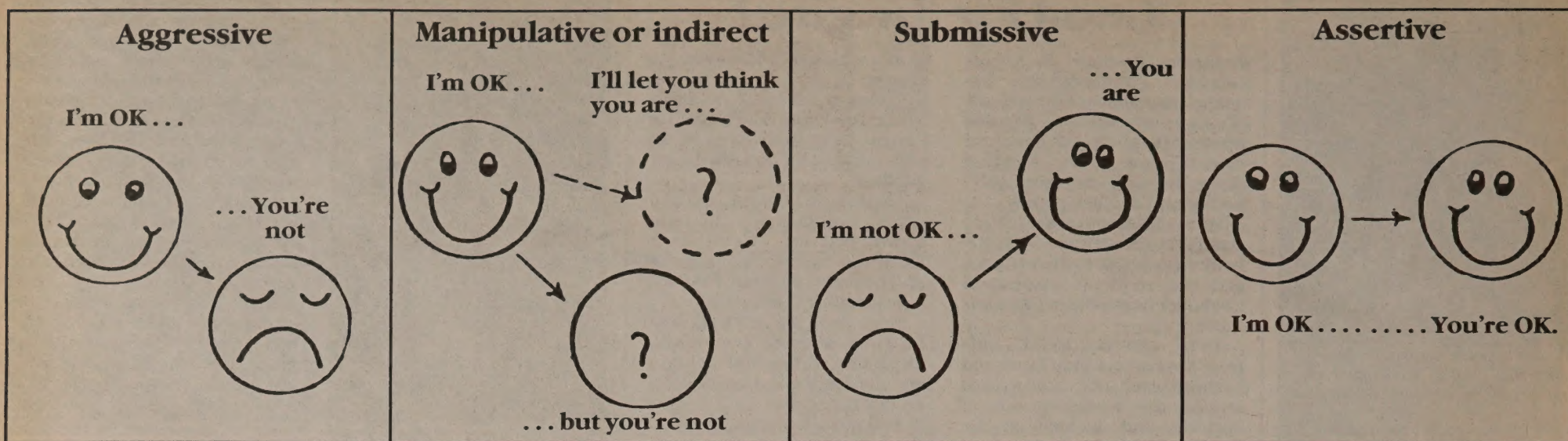
"A Bill will be introduced to abolish the Greater London Council and the metropolitan



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Michael Latter



Nothing happening? "The consumer", Meg Bond, tries to get her money back on a faulty calculator from "the shop manager", Bill Russell, a resident of the Bedford, Derby, and a member of the Buxton Action Group. Meg tried 4 approaches - aggressive, manipulative, submissive and assertive. Bill met them all unflinchingly, politely refusing to bend the terms of the agreement of sale.

CASTLE PRIORY

Rosemary McCloskey reports on a course at Castle Priory College that most of us would want to take

The art of saying "No"

Saying "No" constructively needs practice. It brings into play the main features of assertiveness: being direct, being polite without cringing or sarcasm; stating positively what we want; being specific and truthful about our opinions and feelings; allowing for and requiring a response.

By contrast, not being able to say "No" produces responses like resentment, depression or anger; that uncomfortable feeling of being used while at the same time being labelled or treated as someone who is submissive and to be walked over.

Being consistently unassertive leads to physical and mental overstrain, and sometimes both.

Everyone wants to learn the skill, and the 20 able-bodied and disabled people who took part in the Assertiveness workshop at Castle Priory College in October were no exception.

The workshop was facilitated rather than taught by Meg Bond,

a tutor with the Human Potential Research Project at the University of Surrey, which runs courses in counselling skills for students and the general public.

Meg has worked with disabled people before, and appreciates how difficult it can be for them and those who work with them to communicate feelings and needs without fear of repercussions. There is often little or no opportunity to practice the skills of assertiveness safely.

Meg drew out our own experiences, got us to practice saying "No" to each other, and used role play.

As a result, we gained insight into ourselves and experience in stating more specifically and honestly our wishes and feelings without resorting to manipulation, unnecessary submission or aggression.

The philosophy underlying Assertiveness is a respect for oneself and for other people

rather than a selfish attempt to gain one's own wishes by riding rough shod over other people's feelings (see diagrams).

One of the more difficult things we had to do was to write down a list of criticisms of ourselves which were valid, invalid and partially valid. Then we took these criticisms and used them in role play, learning to cope by responding in appropriate ways without submitting to aggression or false defence.

We also learnt how to give criticism honestly, without damaging others or feeling guilty.

This course was so useful that I hope it is taken up not only by those interested and involved in self-advocacy but as part of training in personal skills for both disabled people and staff in residential and work centres.

Rosemary McCloskey is Tutor Organiser at Castle Priory College, Wallingford.

How I conquered PMT

Lyn Lawrey holds out hope and help to people who suffer from pre-menstrual tension

Many people would think that being spastic was enough to cope with, but from the ages of 11 to 30 I feel I had a second handicap - pre-menstrual tension (PMT). If you can identify with this, I'm here to bring you cheer!

PMT is one of the symptoms of Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS) which has been defined as regularly recurring symptoms before menstruation that com-

pletely disappear after menstruation.

It affects about 40 per cent of women and ranges from annoying symptoms such as clumsiness, bloating, irritability and general aches and pains to more serious manifestations such as asthma, eczema, recurrent inflammation of the eyes, depression or violent aggression.

Most women suffer only a few

of the symptoms and there are no statistics to prove that handicapped women suffer more than their able-bodied counterparts.

However, some women are so affected that their lives are severely disrupted by the problem and they feel like Jekyll and Hyde for the wrong part of the month.

My experience began on my eleventh birthday when I felt "high" for no apparent reason.

During my teens my mood swung from very low to high over approximately six week periods. Once, at school, seeing some ropes in the drying room, I contemplated hanging myself.

It never occurred to me until years later that these extremes of mood could be connected with my periods. I had never heard of pre-menstrual tension. I was too shy to ask any one for help.

The pattern continued into my twenties. I was working, but regularly had to take at least two or three days off each month because of my depression. From 21, I was on anti-depressants. Then, when I was 23, I tried to cut my throat in front of two friends. I was sent to see a psychiatrist and he put me on to some different anti-depressants.

Things got steadily worse. I not only lost job after job but many friends too. A woman GP, who was also a gynaecologist, told me that I was subject to swings of mood and should "get on with it."

I felt I was manic-depressive and nothing could be done.

During this time I became violent towards others, and I'm ashamed to say, I beat up my



Lyn Lawrey

flatmate. She would walk out and then return when we had both calmed down, but in the meantime I would panic thinking that I would be left to pay the rent alone, not to mention losing a very good friend.

Then in 1977 I saw a television programme called *Pull Yourself Together Woman!* on the work of Dr Katharina Dalton, an international authority on PMS. The programme featured a woman who had beaten up her husband and I immediately identified with her.

Shortly after, my flatmate read an article in *Cosmopolitan* about Dr Dalton's treatment with hormones, and we decided that I should try it. To be honest, I thought I was beyond help.

However, I found a GP who was willing to refer me to Dr Dalton and in October 1979 I had my first private consultation in Harley Street.

Since that day I have never looked back.

Part of my treatment consists of taking regular supplements of the hormone progesterone. But the other part is just simple self-help measures that would be useful for anyone suffering PMS symptoms.

The secret is to eat little and often throughout the month. I eat every 2 or 3 hours and the snacks must include starch - bread, biscuits or potatoes. Also I must not go more than 12 hours at night without eating, so I make sure I have a snack at bedtime. The snacks prevent my blood sugar level falling too low which would precipitate PMS symptoms.

Dr Dalton says that if one keeps to this eating pattern and eats a normal, healthy diet, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, there is no need to restrict salt, coffee or liquids. Adequate sleep, fresh air and exercise are necessary at all times to maintain good health, not just before a period.

As a result of my experience, both my flatmate and I wanted to help other women with their problems.

We joined the National Association for the Pre-Menstrual Syndrome and became the London representatives.

The Association was formed in 1983 and this year obtained charitable status. It now has 400 members and 20 area representatives. The aim is to form a national network of support groups for PMS sufferers.

Anyone who would like to know more about the Association, or obtain our booklet *Understanding PMS*, should write to me.

Understanding PMS costs 50p or is free to members who pay a £5 annual subscription. Write to Lyn Lawrey, 5 Leighton Road, Ealing, London W13 9EL, with a stamped addressed A4 envelope. Once a month by Dr Katharina Dalton is published by Fontana Books at £1.95.

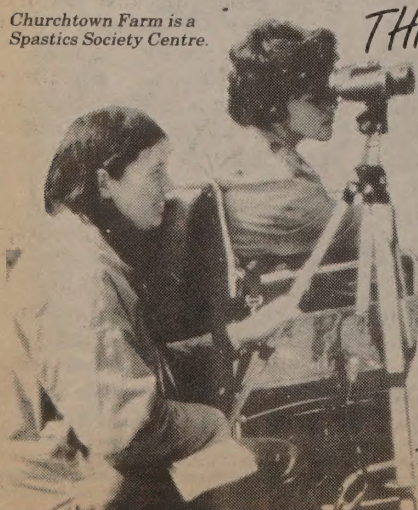
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A spectacular beginning for the project? HTV West personality, Bruce Hockin (left) sorts through the first contributions with CPO Director, Derek Lancaster-Gaye.

A new way to help

Second-hand aids will be refurbished in Zimbabwe

A pioneering scheme to ship second-hand aids to Zimbabwe was launched in Bristol last month.

TV personality Bruce Hockin of HTV West did the honours, supported by Councillor Tom Turvey, Chairman of Avon County, Mr Thomas Bvuma of the Zimbabwe High Commission and Mr Walter Harbert, Avon's Director of Social Services.

By arrangement with local and health authorities in the Bristol and Avon area, members of the public are being asked to search their garages and lofts for disused aids - tricycles, prams, calipers, spectacles, mobility and hearing aids. These will be collected by CPO assisted by local organisations like Rotary.

Although some aids will turn out to belong to the local authority, it is expected that most of them will be available for CPO. They will be shipped to Zimbabwe where they will be refurbished and issued to those in need.

The Avon scheme is the beginning of a far larger project which will help develop a work centre in Bulawayo employing disabled

workers. They will be trained in the manufacture of aids and equipment.

The second hand aids will be an immediate contribution towards employing people who because of their immobility have not been able to get work.

Later, new aids will be manufactured at the work centre using local skills and local materials.

CPO is to co-operate with Avon in developing prototypes for manufacture in Zimbabwe using the skills of such organisations as AHRTAG and The Handicap Institute in Sweden.

A workshop manager will be found in Bulawayo and brought to the UK by CPO for training. This will probably take place in a workshop run by Avon County.

CPO's commitment to the scheme will continue until the work centre in Bulawayo has been running for a year, after which it will hand over to a local voluntary organisation called ABILITIES.

£50,000 is needed to fund the whole scheme. A local appeal in Avon has already raised £5,000 with promises of much more.



One of the first professional teams organised by Cerebral Palsy Overseas is leaving for Mexico this month. The visit will last 3 weeks.

It is funded by the British Council and organisations in Mexico.

Seven professionals experienced in the fields of cerebral palsy and mental handicap will undertake practical work in 3 cp centres in Mexico City run by the Asociacion pro Paralitico: a kindergarten and early stimulation programme; a school; and a centre for adults offering extended education, training and employment. Together these centres provide for some 450 cp people a day.

The team will work alongside APAC staff, which now exceed 200, exchanging ideas and knowledge.

CPO has brought together a multi-disciplinary team. Dr David Morris is a paediatrician. Dorothy Seglow (late of the Watford Spastics Centre) is a physiotherapist and an exponent of conductive education. Dr Janet Carr is lecturer in mental and multiple handicap at St George's Hospital Medical School and author of *Helping Your Handicapped Child*. Sheena Wickens is an occupational therapist with Islington Social Services. Carol Myer from the White Lodge Centre in Chertsey is the team's educationalist. And Kennett Westmacott from the Handicapped Educational Aids Research Unit of the City of London Polytechnic is the team's nuts and bolts man.

Janet Carr and Sheena Wickens will work in 2 of the City's



A welcoming boy, supported by Senora Marcella Ruiz Limon, who runs APAC's 3 centres.

The team is coming to Mexico

Derek Lancaster-Gaye reports

psychiatric hospitals training volunteer technicians from another voluntary organisation, the Fundacion Mexicana para la Rehabilitacion del Enfermo Mental. They will concentrate on the skills needed to work with mentally handicapped patients in hospital and on setting up activity programmes. Their work will also extend to the Fundacion's new day centre which provides for 17 patients from the Sayago Hospital.

Built within the last 20 years, Sayago Hospital ought to have facilities well in advance of many psychiatric hospitals in the United Kingdom.

When Susan Reid, daughter of the Society's deputy director, went to an American university, it wasn't long before she was helping disabled people

INTERNATIONAL

Our ambassador in Eau Claire

My first real view of America in the Fall in 1982 was the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. Eau Claire is a town in North West Wisconsin, and Wisconsin itself is directly north of Chicago.

Being a foreign student, I had to live in the dorms. This was a totally new experience as I had never lived with 150 people before.

One of my first friends was Scott Johnson. He had cerebral palsy and lived on the ground floor of the dorm.

Scott came from Minneapolis, the biggest city in the area, and was worried about how he would be accepted in a small town like Eau Claire. He soon found, to his delight, that the old students readily accepted him.

Scott and other disabled students were well catered for. US law says that facilities must be provided in all public buildings for disabled people, and Eau Claire was no exception. Each dorm had specially built bedrooms at ground level, all with their own bathrooms.

Access to academic buildings was easy: there were ramps and wide doors with conveniently positioned handles. Stairs were no problem either due to a lift system that could be used by key holders only. Although the campus had been built on two levels with a steep hill between them,

this too had been solved by providing a free bus shuttle service.

After settling into life at Eau Claire, I decided to get involved with one of the college fraternities so as to meet more people.

Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) was starting a Little Sister organisation to help them with various service and social projects.

I was appointed Service Chairman. My duties included choosing a charity to help.

Eventually we decided on United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) which has organisations all over the US. I went to see the local programme director, Darwin Smith. Darwin told us that we could be of most use helping the bowling team. So twice a month a group of TKE Little Sisters went to the bowling alley and joined in. The most important job we did seemed to be talking and being

friendly.

About 30 disabled people went bowling, ranging in age from 12 to 60, with varying degrees of cerebral palsy.

Martha was the most severely handicapped. She was confined to a wheelchair and could only move her head, but she lived in her own apartment with daily help. She was one of the best bowlers in the league with an average of around 100, which is 60 above me! She accomplished this by pushing the ball with her chin.

From the youngest to the oldest in the group, I found they were all very happy and there were signs of complete integration into the community.

The following January I was given a very unusual opportunity - to appear on TV. Because of my involvement with UCP and The Spastics Society, the UCP Programme Director for Wisconsin, Ruth Gullerud, called me and asked if I would appear on the local broadcast of the National Telethon for UCP.

The Telethon is a 24 hour programme of entertainment by various personalities and broadcast simultaneously on TV stations across the country. The entertainment is punctuated by calls for donations to UCP. People then phone in to pledge money.

On the day, I was shown to a



Ruth Gullerud, the UCP Programme Director for Wisconsin.



Susan Reid

telephone and asked to answer the pledge calls. Then came my big turn: I had a whole 2 minutes to talk about The Spastic Society and its work. As the programme was local and at 8.00am I wasn't seen by millions across the nation, much to my delight!

The Telethon was important to UCP not only as a means of connecting local area organisations in one national fund-raising effort, but also because UCP relies entirely upon donations and gets little or no aid from State or Federal funds. The services offered in each area depend upon the money raised and local need. Consequently, services vary from one State to another.

Ruth Gullerud told me that while each local organisation is governed by national guidelines, it has its own goals.

In Wisconsin, integration into the community is very important; in fact, Wisconsin is one of the leading States in encouraging people with cerebral palsy to

Unfortunately, the opportunity to develop services whose philosophy is both humanitarian and progressive was not taken, with the result that Mexico City's services to the mentally handicapped are totally uncaring and custodial. Staff have little idea of the skills necessary to work with their patients and apparently little motivation to extend their knowledge.

CPO intends to promote a new awareness of the needs and aspirations of those 500 patients and to help create a sense of meaning to their lives. Unless the Fundacion is able to establish more day centres in the community and the City authorities can be persuaded to promote community support services, those people will remain in hospital for the rest of their lives.

Mexico City (population 18 million) has plans for many new services, but given the enormous economic problems there is little chance of them becoming reality. As usual, the mentally handicapped scarcely appear in the schedule of priorities. Hopefully, CPO's work will help to change this.

Whilst APAC strives to meet the demands of cerebral palsy in Mexico City the population outside, some 60 million, has virtually no awareness of cp and certainly no services. Members of the team will go to Guadalajara and Monterrey to talk with professionals and parents in an attempt to remove some of the doubts and uncertainties that exist and to promote the development of services for cp people and their families.

Aids in Mexico are both scarce and expensive. Kennett Westmacott will be holding 3 aids workshops in Mexico City and the countryside to teach professionals and parents how to make simple aids using local materials and local tools.

At Aguascalientes, a small town some 400 miles from Mexico City, members of the team will also work in the early stimulation unit.

Separately from the team project, CPO is to advise the authorities of Aguascalientes on how to set up a workshop for disabled people who will make aids and equipment. Plans are being prepared in the UK and Senora Azul de Landeros, wife of the Governor, has undertaken to have the building completed in 3 months after she receives the plans. With the help of the British Council, a potential workshop manager will be brought to the UK for training.

Plans are also being laid to identify a Mexican doctor interested in cp and to provide training in the UK.

move out of institutions and into their own specially adapted apartments.

Those who are too severely handicapped to manage these apartments are offered a home-like atmosphere with 5 or 6 people to each home.

Ruth, who has cerebral palsy, was very enthusiastic about this development because she feels that every person has a right to live in a family atmosphere.

Both UCP and The Spastics Society seem to share the same goals although they have different methods of funding their projects.

My whole experience in the US was extremely rewarding, and not just academically. The people I met were friendly, open and for the most part accepting of foreigners.

After two years in America I was sad to leave my second home.

... AGM ... AGM ... AGM ... AGM

More business

Jack Blake



retired as a member of the Executive Council. Mrs Joyce Smith and Douglas Shapland. "Dr Regan has been a loyal member of the Council," said Mrs Smith. "His influence on the Council, and his difficulties, she would find a way out." Mrs Shapland said, "Dr Regan was most excited by Save's attitudes to handicapped babies change to treatment, to prevention," she said. "The level of consensus on the Council seemed to gel in the end."



talking with Hilda and Richard Sharp. Donald Funge-Smith, Chairman of the West Regional Committee and District Spastics Association.



Rosalind Osborne (left), secretary of the Colwyn Bay Group, and Anne Endacott, the welfare chairman.



Award for retiring chairman

The Duchess of Kent's Patron Service Award was presented to Donald Funge-Smith by Mrs Joyce Smith at the AGM. He has retired after 11 years as Chairman of the Croydon, Sutton and District Spastics Society - although he will remain on its Executive Committee.

Where we are, where we're going

The afternoon was given over to a presentation by 5 directors on developments in the past year and objectives for 1985.

"We asked for this," said John Cox, "because we feel that communication is vital between the Groups - the sharp end, as I call it - and Head Office."

He emphasised that the document so far produced was consultative and had not yet been discussed by the Executive Council. However, he hoped that it would be available by December.

A long-term corporate plan would be ready, he hoped, in a year's time.

He then presented his own objectives (see *Disability Now*, November).

Regional services

"During the past year, 'Regions' has been taking a close look at itself," said Ann Hithersay.

She mentioned proposals to end the County Organiser experiment begun in 1981 which had combined two jobs in one person: raising funds and developing services. Roles would become more specialised, she said, and there were plans for more field staff to support Groups and develop services.

Objectives for 1985 include seeking new young parents who will build and maintain local groups - "a matter of extreme urgency" - giving more professional advice and help to Groups, identifying gaps in service provision and deciding priorities, and improving the efficiency of regional appeals. One proposal was to appoint appeals coordinators in each Region.

Ann Hithersay talked of the decision to withdraw "childform collecting dolls".

"The image of the begging

cripple is no longer acceptable to a generation of young cerebral palsied people," she said. Alternative models were being sought.

As an MSC National Managing Agency, the Society plans to increase service projects and so provide jobs for up to 200 people in 1985 by sponsoring more schemes.

Education

The "new, very different focus" of the 1981 Education Act; a difficult climate in which special schools are in danger of losing their populations; shortage of money, and the changing nature and complexity of handicap all signal changes in special education.

"I hope to persuade the Executive Council that the Society must reflect those changes in what it does," said Freddie Green, the new Director of Education.

Already the Society's schools, colleges, Castle Priory College, the Centre for the Study of Integration, Churchtown Farm and the Society's psychologists have been brought together in one educational division.

Freddie Green spoke of the current uncertainty about what education should be for. A short term objective, he said, was to evaluate the present curriculum, "what we're doing and for whom", as a prerequisite for deciding how the curriculum should be developed and the training that should go with it.

"We have got to be very much more outward looking", he said, and he talked of offering an educational advisory and support service to affiliated schools, local groups and cp children and their families.

He expressed interest in home education for under-5s ("the

portage movement"), and concern about post-19 education.

"We've got, somehow, to blur this 19+ barrier and in fact we've got to break it," he said. "So we should be moving towards services that will go into young adulthood."

Finally, research was important "to identify where we're changing and how we're changing," he said. An example of monitoring change was the feasibility study now going on into the use of microtechnology in both the Society's and affiliated schools.

Social services

John Belcher's presentation concentrated on the residential and day care services offered by the central Society which takes the largest chunk of his budget, £8,000,000, and three-quarters of the manpower resources in the division.

"It is the area where most work is needed to be done if once again we are to be leaders and innovators in the field of residential and day care provision," he said.

The extensive re-organisation and decentralisation that had taken place during the year reflected the principle that the services should value the cp person as a full citizen with rights and responsibilities.

Improving the quality of people's lives and the service within those units was the aim for 1985, bearing in mind the Registered Homes Act 1984 and the Code of Practice.

John Belcher hopes to develop a whole range of residential services which will respond to the needs of the ageing parent who cares for an adult person with cp, the severely disabled school-leaver and the cp person discharged from long-stay hospital.

He would also like to develop a comprehensive day care strategy in co-operation with the Education and Regions divisions, and look at the day care needs of the adult cp population.

Publicity and marketing

"We are experiencing a 'shift in emphasis' in The Spastics Society", said Andrew Ross, the Marketing Director.

"There is pressure from both within and from outside our organisation to be seen as more pro-active, working with as well as for disabled people, inspiring people with our plans for the future as well as our ability to cope with the problems of the present, to be informative as well as appealing."

The Publicity and Information Department was working to interpret this shift in the Society's publicity, he said. Examples were the advertising campaign, the development of *Disability Now* and the encouragement of creative work by disabled people.

Market research was being used to find out from cp people, parents, staff, local groups and other volunteer helpers how they see the word "spastic" and "The Spastics Society".

Besides using the existing methods to raise money which have all seen a good year, Andrew Ross plans in 1985 to raise legacy income, build up direct response selling - which is a new departure for The Spastics Society - and "sharpen our skills" in capital fund raising.

Key Questions

Disabled people taking part in meetings, communication, employment and discrimination were some of the important issues raised by people at the AGM.

Taking part

Kathy Berry (a member of the Society's Educational Advisory Committee) asked why so few disabled people were present. "What is it about the way we function that creates this situation?" she asked.

It was agreed that disabled people were welcome at the AGM.

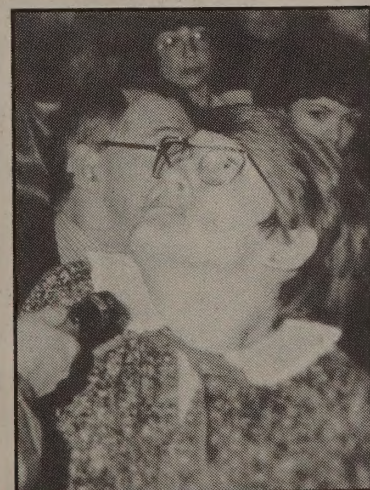
Andy Berry thought that there was some hesitancy on the part of able-bodied members at group level to allow disabled people to take their full part. Agreeing with Ken Smith (see *Disability Now*, November) he said, "There is a certain feeling, I believe, that we should be grateful for what we get and perhaps not really allowed to take our full role".

Another reason why disabled people such as himself did not get more involved was because they were just too busy, he said.

"As you can hear, I am very severely disabled and need total care," said Caryl Lloyd (Princess Marina Centre) "I would like to be able to do more for The Spastics Society. However, without proper training I think I am quite unable to do so at the present time."

sent time."

"We should not be made to feel that because we need total care we should be grateful for every single thing that we get," she said. "We should be able to show other people our appreciation by doing more work for our disabled colleagues."



Caryl Lloyd

John Cox thought the question of participation was very important. He hoped that a new constitution for the Consumer Group would be ratified by the Executive Council and the Regions which would allow representation from regions and groups. The Society will have to look carefully at training to see if there is any way in which it can help, he said.

Communication

Hilary Janes (Health Visitors Association) asked if the Society

had the technology to make it easier for some of the disabled people present to communicate. "They should be able to have their say," she said.

Freddie Green thought the problem of self-advocacy stemmed from childhood and there was a long history in the UK of handicapped people being compliant. The 1981 Education Act was an attempt to encourage parental independence. "I think our schools, for example, should start the whole business off by not producing young people who become compliant clients", he said.

John Cox acknowledged that much more work needed to be done in the area of communication aids. A 6-month study on the use of microtechnology in the Society's schools was underway and he promised a report.

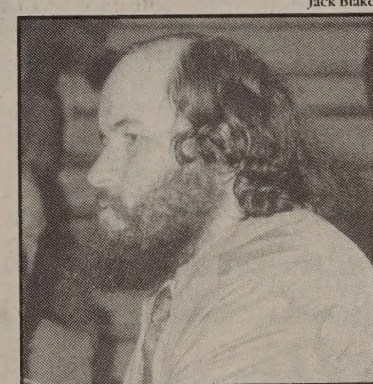
Voluntary work

Hugh Thomas (Urmston & District Spastics Group) was concerned about the attitude of the DHSS to voluntary work. Disabled people who did voluntary work feared that their benefits would be withdrawn.

Freddie Green thought that society had to reconsider the meaning of work.

"Many young people with special needs are in the vanguard of that movement and therefore it is up to us as a Society in co-operation with other voluntary bodies to seriously address this question," he said.

Ann Hithersay added that unemployed volunteers help in 15



Hugh Thomas

playschemes organised by the Society in mental handicap hospitals, and others help for longer periods at Churchtown farm and in holiday organisations while still retaining their benefits.

Discrimination

"I dislike the word 'spastic' and prefer to be called 'cerebral palsied'", commented Denise Bloomfield (Waltham Forest Cerebral Palsy Group). She told of how her job contract is due to run out and a DRO came to visit her. When he heard that her qualifications were to "A" level, he said, "Oh, you are too clever for me. I can't deal with you."

"I've got the right to work. Why should I be discriminated against because I'm a woman and I had an 'A' level education?" she said.

John Cox thanked her for the information. The Society had been asked to pass on to the MSC any complaints about DROs, and he would do so.

A new benefit for some long-term sick and disabled people.

Our leaflet explains who's eligible.

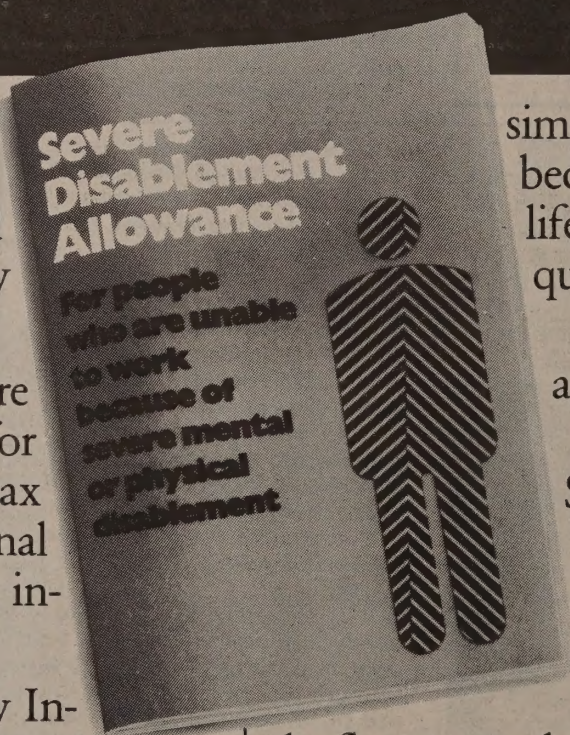
Some long-term sick and disabled people will now be able to claim a new benefit if they are unable to work and don't qualify for Sickness or Invalidity Benefit.

The new benefit is called Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA for short), and is worth £21.50 a week, tax free. It does not depend on National Insurance contributions, and doesn't involve a means test.

SDA replaces Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension (NCIP) and Housewives' Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension (HNCIP). Everyone who used to receive NCIP or HNCIP will have been transferred to SDA automatically.

One of the main differences between SDA and the previous benefits is that married women will be able to claim SDA even if they are able to carry out normal household duties.

People who have been incapable of work since before their 20th birthday can qualify for SDA



simply on that basis. Those who become incapable of work later in life must also be severely disabled to qualify.

People aged 50 or over and those aged 16 to 34 can get SDA now.

Those aged 35 to 49 cannot get SDA until November 1985 but may still be able to claim NCIP or HNCIP if they met the conditions before November 29, 1984.

Pick up a copy of the SDA leaflet at your local social security office or fill in the coupon below and send it to DHSS Leaflets Unit, P.O. Box 21, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AY.

Please send me the explanatory leaflet and claim form for:
Severe Disablement Allowance ☐ NCIP ☐ HNCIP ☐
Tick the one(s) you want (please allow 21 days for delivery).

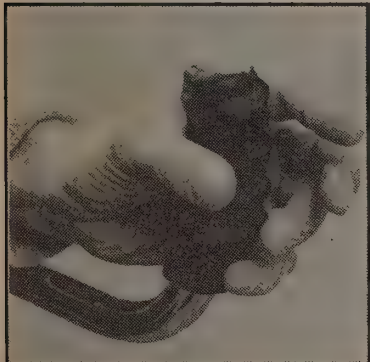
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CHRISTMAS

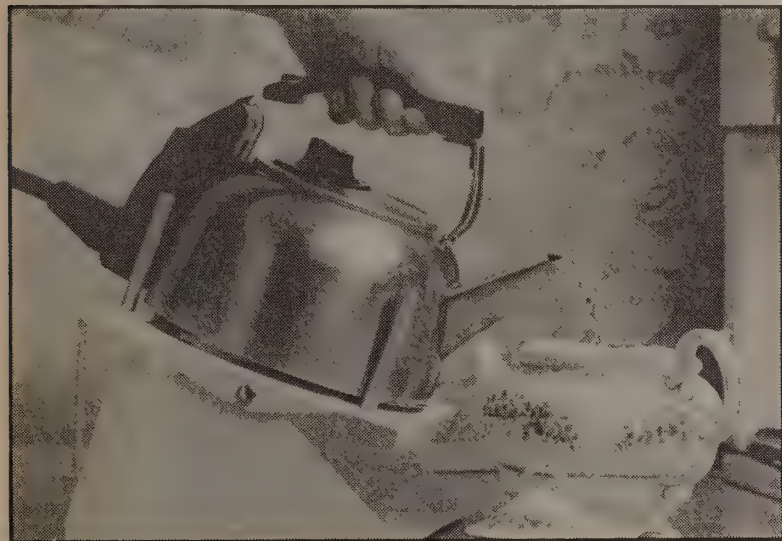
presents
that people will
really appreciate



U2 Form provides a tailored grip for people who have deformed hands and restricted movement. A mould is made from the softened material which then dries off. £2.30 a tablet. Beacon Developments, 105 Station Road, Ashwell, Baldock, Herts. Tel: (046274) 2214.

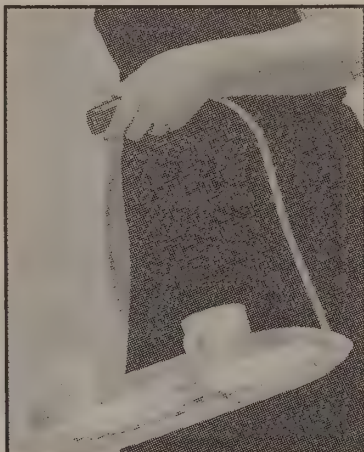


Stephen Lenton and Carrina Orenas have not only won praise from the Society's occupational therapists for their sturdy, stimulating, hand-made wooden toys. Their company has also won £5,000 and other benefits through MIDAS, the Leicestershire business awards scheme created by local government and private companies. From left to right, paddle wheel toy, £8.20; large activity centre, £45; abacus shape sorter, £15; small ball frame, £7.21; rotating ball toy, £9.10; chime, about £10, plus postage and VAT. Edu-play Toys, 450 Hinkley Road, Leicester. Tel: (0533) 857849.



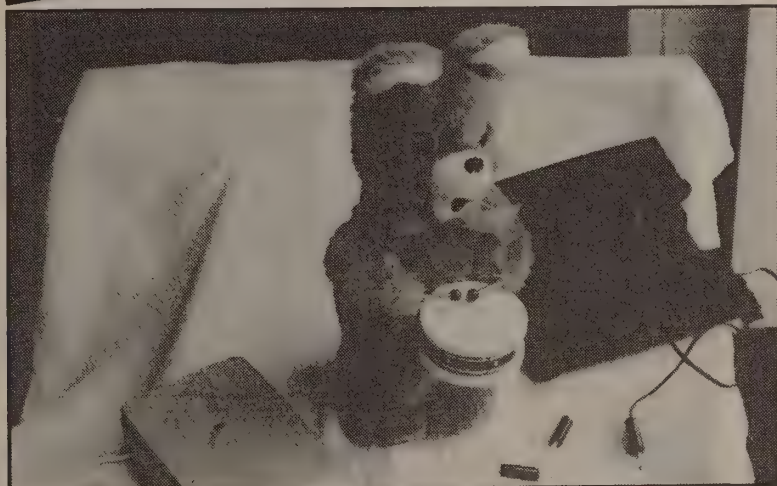
The Sunflower Kettle Tipper needs only gentle pressure to make a hot drink. £14. From the Nottingham Medical Aids 1984/5 catalogue, 17 Ludlow Hill Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6HD. Tel: 0602 234251. (Minimum order £10).

CHRISTMAS

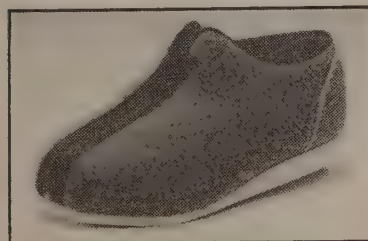


The Dycem free-hand tray has the added advantage of a non-slip surface. £15.60 plus VAT from Days Medical Aids, Litchard Industrial Estate, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan. Tel: (0656) 57495.

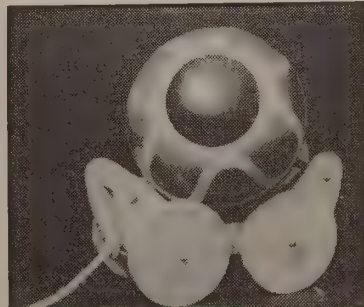
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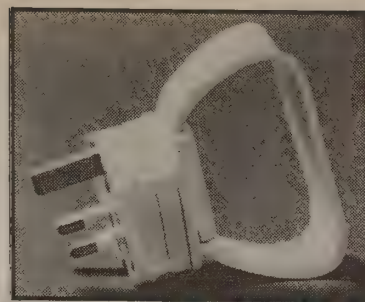
The wooden switch (left, £4.50) or the smaller of 2 available soft switch pads, £4, come with a battery adaptor. Information sheet and list of suitable battery operated toys also available. Bradford Activity Toys, 103 Dockfield Road, Shipley West, Yorkshire. Tel: (0274) 594173.



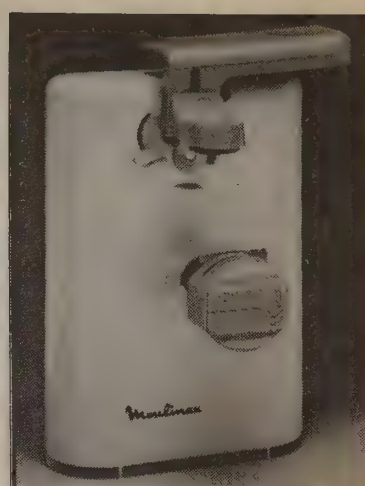
Heavy-weight, washable slipper in blue and red conveniently zips up the front. £8.30 a pair. P. R. Cooper (Footline), 27 Stoughton St South, Leicester. Tel: (0533) 29482.



The Society's Sully Works made this roller ball toy. £7.75 from Country Wide Workshops.



The enlarged plastic loop handle on this standard 13 amp plug makes it easier to hold. £3.54 (includes VAT and postage). Tremorvab Industries, Rentoul Works, Royal Cornwall Hospital (City), Truro, Cornwall.

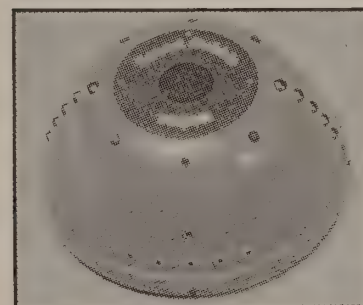


The Moulinex electric can opener/knife sharpener needs 2 hands and light pressure. Free-standing or wall mounted. £13.95 from leading electrical retailers or department stores.

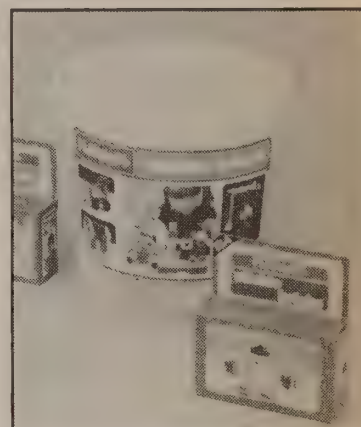
CHRISTMAS



With Knitterella you can knit with one hand using many different stitches and patterns and most wools. it is 18 in long, has 2 rows of pegs and clips firmly to a table top. £14.95 (plus £2 p & p) with knitting tool and instructions from Knitterella Ltd, 21 Kingsland High St, London E.8. Tel: 01-254 9084.

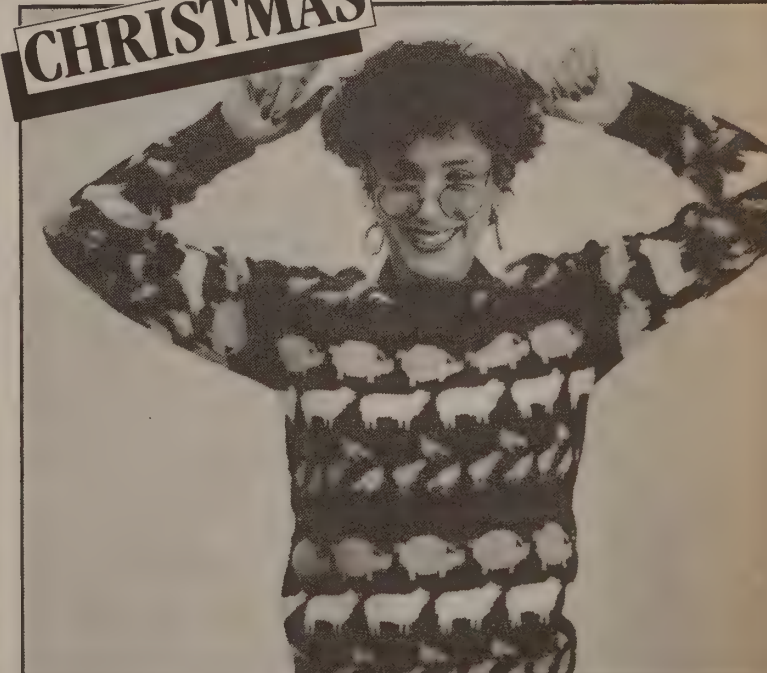


When the metallic sensors on the Sound Bubble are touched, the child hears sounds and sees flashing lights. The same effect is produced if 6 pressure pads are plugged in. Bubble £30, set of pads £18.50 from Toys for the Handicapped, 76 Barracks Rd, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs.

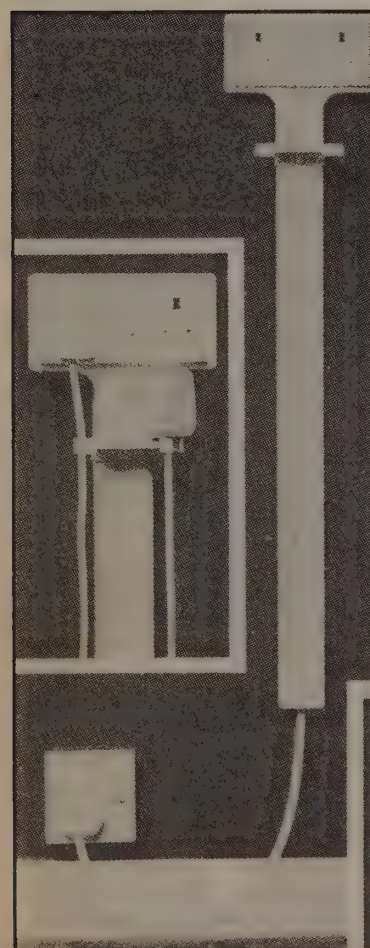


The Playskool Stickle Bricks fit together more easily than other construction sets. Various sizes from bucket (£11.20-£14) to mini pack (£1.65-£2.05). From department stores.

CHRISTMAS



Sbetland sweater with brightly coloured farm animals comes in child sizes (26 in to 30 in, £16) or adults up to 40 in to 44 in, £31.05-£33.10. From the new catalogue of Country Wide Workshops, now a charity, which sells products made by disabled people. 17c Earls Court Square, London SW5. Tel: 01-373 9943.



The Extendaplug quickly raises 13 amp sockets to an accessible height. A plug/cable holder prevents plugs falling. £15.99 (plus VAT). F. Lewellyn & Co, Carlton St, Liverpool L3 7ED. Tel: (051) 236 5311.



The children's fancy dress competition was part of the celebration.

The festival that forged a link

A new cross-cultural link was forged in Preston in October when a group of Gujarati Hindus invited representatives from the Preston and District Spastics Society to take part in their Navaratri Festival and accept a cheque for £200.

Bobby Cartwright, Secretary of the Group, and her colleague Sue Pratt attended the final night of the 9-day thanksgiving to the gods for the end of the Monsoon.

As part of their celebration, the Preston Mochi Gnati Mandal - local Gujarati businessmen and their families - make a candle-lit door-to-door collection and give the proceeds to charity.

This is the first time the Preston and District Spastics Society has received the gift.

"We saw the society men-

tioned in the local press and we knew it did a lot for local children," said Pravin Parmar, a senior committee member of the Preston Mochi Gnati Mandal. "We thought they deserved it."

The evening began with an hour of prayers. Then the festivities continued with a children's fancy dress competition, the presentation of the cheque and finally dancing till 11pm.

Bobby Cartwright was surprised to find that each dance lasted half an hour.

"What stamina they have!" she said, "especially the older people."

This new association looks as if it will continue. Bobby Cartwright has asked to be at the festivities next year, and the Mochi Gnati Mandal are pleased that she wants to come again.

A shoulder to lean on

Carol and Michael Lane hope their new support group for families with pre-school children will provide just the shoulder to lean on they needed when their son Christopher was born quadriplegic nearly 2 years ago.

Since at present there are no such facilities in Cardiff, they have the backing of Cardiff and District Spastics Society who are printing leaflets for them and hiring out a hall for their meetings.

Less than 2 months after they formed the group, 10 families have become involved.

"Having a handicapped child is a very difficult situation which a lot of parents can't accept," says Carol. "We aim to get parents discussing what they need and want. It's important that they find out they're not alone, and they can compare the treatment their children are receiving."

"At the moment we're a bit like a grumble group," she adds.

The Lanes' group has grown from a series of coffee mornings and social events to a pre-school playgroup run by parents.

There is a playgroup in mid-Glamorgan, but this is too far away for many families in Cardiff. And although Carol believes that state provision for disabled children at an assessment centre in Cardiff is quite good, she is not happy about someone like Christopher being shut away from his parents for the day.

"Private playgroups tell us that handicapped children need extra heating and help which they can't afford to provide. But we have no problems coping with and stimulating our own children," she says. And we will

accept any child in the playgroup, no matter how severely disabled they are." The Lanes are producing a leaflet about the group and plan talks by paediatricians and physiotherapists to bring in new ideas.

"The paediatricians in local hospitals are very interested in what we do and we want them to tell parents that we exist," says Carol. "When we had Christopher we could have done with that."

Carol and Michael believe it is important to strengthen the family unit, and want to get fathers involved. Michael points out that the divorce rate of



Carol and Michael Lane with their son Christopher.

parents with disabled children is very high.

"United we stand, divided we fall" would be a pretty good motto for us," he says.

They also want able-bodied brothers and sisters to come along.

"Handicapped children can learn a lot from able-bodied children," says Carol. "By the time they go to school they are separated anyway. There's a tendency to whisk people like Chris away into a box before they've had a chance."

LOCAL GROUP NEWS



Edited by Simon Crompton

OBITUARY

Bill Hobbins

William Harry Hobbins, Chairman of the Midland Spastic Association for more than 30 years, died on 21 October.

During the time that Bill Hobbins was Chairman his firm handling of any problem and his clear vision enabled the Association to go from strength to strength.

He devoted a lifetime of concern and dedication to the welfare of people with cerebral palsy. He will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him, and particularly by those (and there were many) who had cause to be grateful for his care and interest.

The Midland Spastic Association has sustained a great loss in the death of Bill Hobbins, but because of his wise guidance it will continue to maintain its service to all those whose welfare was his concern over so many years.

Evelyn Hurd

To Gregory, integration is making phone calls

What under-five, disabled or able-bodied, would say no to the chance of making "calls" from a toy telephone box?

Gregory Hemment, from the Rutherford Children's Centre, spent his first afternoon at Purley Nursery School doing just that.

For nearly 2 terms, a group of staff and children from the Centre, which is run by the Croydon and District Spastics Society, has spent one afternoon a week at the school putting into practice the principles of the 1981 Education Act.

According to staff, it has brought benefits to both groups.



Richard McFarlane of the nursery playing with Gareth Evans (front).

Judith Thomas, a member of staff at Rutherford, writes:

"Rutherford Children's Centre in South Croydon is an old house with facilities for about 30 brain-damaged children, mostly pre-school. At 5 or 6 many children go to ordinary local authority schools. Those with more severe disabilities stay on at the centre's special care unit.

It is a small and intimate set-up.

In contrast, Purley Nursery is modern and purpose-built, housing up to 80 boisterous 3-5 year olds at a time.

On our first visit we took just 3 children with 2 helpers - Gareth Evans, a very active Down's Syndrome boy of 4, Gregory Hemment, a mentally and physically disabled boy of 4 with severe asthma, and an athetoid girl of 6 in a wheelchair. All are very sociable, and we felt these particular children would most easily adapt to the new environment.

To begin with our children were rather overwhelmed by the sheer number of children rushing round and the many different activities available.

Straight away the nursery children sensed that our children were different. Many of them seemed unsure and rather frightened and would only stand and stare from a distance. A few children were more adventurous and were more inquisitive than frightened.

They asked questions like 'Why has she got rails on her legs?' and 'Why doesn't she walk?'

Some children seemed unable to cope at all and said things like 'Don't bring her again.'

However, our children greatly enjoyed their first afternoon. Gareth rushed around trying each activity - he didn't know which to try out first, they all looked such fun. The athetoid girl loved being surrounded by active children but she also found it frustrating. The nursery has no special equipment which makes it extremely difficult for her to get involved in activities.

As the term progressed we introduced 2 more children, and as we became more familiar visitors at the nursery the children got more used to us. The initial uncertainty disappeared and some of the children got very protective and caring towards our children."



Rebecca Osbourne (left) from the nursery with Chantelle Spence of Rutherford.

Julie Bryant, a teacher at Purley Nursery writes:

"Through these visits staff, children and parents at Purley have all begun to understand what 'special needs' really means.

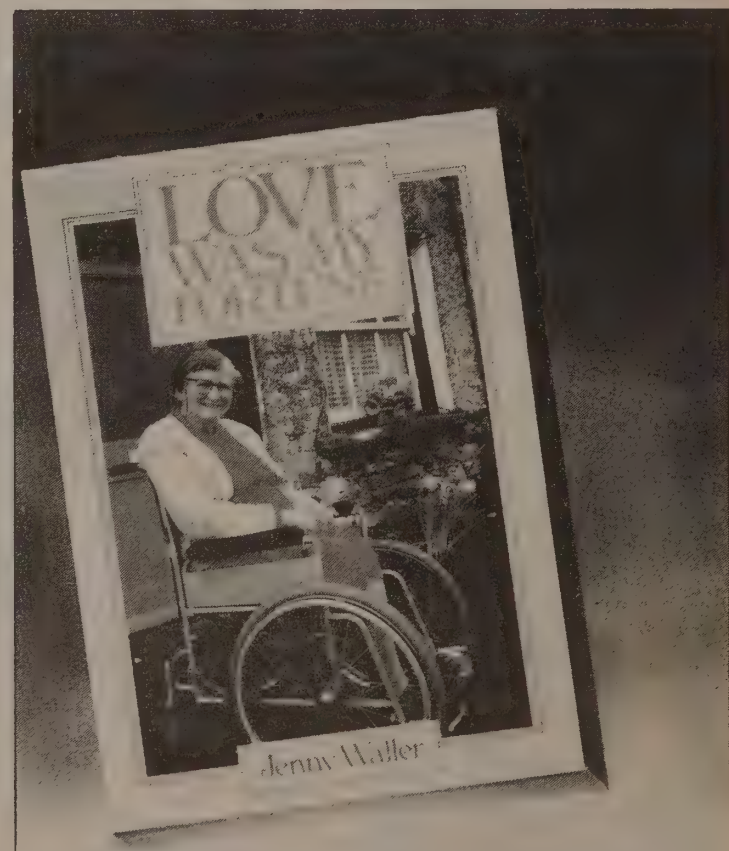
We have seen our children help those with difficulties; we have seen their complete acceptance of them and at times we have seen their envy of specialised equipment.

Our children have been able to 'play' on and test the equipment themselves and realise what life in a wheelchair may be like.

The visits always prompted discussion between staff and children. The children's understanding of problems is helped when questions such as 'Will they get better?' and 'Why can't they walk like us?' are asked.

After an afternoon of general nursery activities we always end with music. This is an absolute delight, with Rutherford children encouraging some of our children to join in the games and dancing - very often where our staff have failed.

The staff of Rutherford show an exceptional and caring attitude, are always willing to expand out knowledge of children's problems and are always giving us extra help with our activities."



"Love was my fortune" is a graphic account of a woman's struggle in spite of severe physical disability to prove that she was not a "handicapped person" but a normal person with a severe handicap. Jenny Waller was born a spastic unable to control the use of her arms and legs, determined to earn a living and achieve an independence. Her battle against bureaucracy, her persistence in finding training and work, her courtship and marriage to a man severely disabled by arthritis, the joy in giving birth to a son and daughter and coping with the loneliness of widowhood, are described with feeling and honesty.

Her literary talents have twice won her Poetry prizes in the Spastics Literary Competition: this story should bring hope to all physically disabled people.

Available by post from Westmorland Gazette, (Dept. GLF) 22 Stricklandgate, Kendal Cumbria. Price (inc p & p) £3.47

OUTLOOK

Books

Write Angles - A Collection of Poetry and Prose

Edited by The Spastics Society. Foreword by Jeffrey Archer (Hodder and Stoughton with The Spastics Society, 1984, £3.50)

It was very kind of Jeffrey Archer to donate the amount he received as income from the Public Lending Right (money paid by the Government to authors for the use of their work by public library borrowers) to allow this anthology to be produced. The book is offered to a larger audience and rightly so, for it contains as much good verse and prose as the average collection.

The items, all entries for the literary competition run by The Spastics Society, have been arranged in themes: Perception, Imagination, Experience, with a final one that might have been headed Observation, but which is called The Seasons.

Wisely, no distinction is made between the adult and young contributors, though the age of the junior writers is given.

The poems claim the attention first, particularly those by children. The largest number of contributions are, quite naturally, by the best-known among disabled writers, Christopher Nolan.

I find his early writings more interesting than the later: the fragmented, vivid series of images strike home. For instance, his first poem: "Polarized I was paralysed/ Plausibility palated/ People realised totally/ Woefully once I totally opened their eyes."

Another young writer wrote this evocative verse, part of her "Sea Tang", when she was 12: "Sometimes I've seen the huge waves rise and fall,/ Ridden by white horses, under heavy skies,/ Mountainous waves, that roared and smacked and clapped,/ Smashing in rage against the cracked sea wall."

Among the adult writers I found Yvonne Klein-Bentley's tulip poem, "Mute Trumpets", the most satisfying. It concluded: "Alive and glowing, they prelude promises of summer,/ Of light, and lazy, sunlight days./ It matters not their voice cannot be heard,/ For theirs is still a shout of glory."

The prose seems to me to fall into two categories - those which come from direct experience and those which are flights of imagination. I found those in the first category much more satisfying.

Some of the ghost stories were a little trite and some of the others overwritten. The best of these, I thought, was Philip Roy Lucas's "Cat on Cool Tiles".

Among those coming from experience, I would single out Hilary Stevenson's "The Time Will Come" and David J Swift's "The Loneliness of a Short Story Writer".

Of course, imagination and experience can be combined, as in the most striking story in the anthology, Andrew M Robertson's "Coda".

Obviously some of the entries are more accomplished than others, but all in all this is a good read. Pity, though, that someone did not dream up a better title.

David Holloway
Literary Editor, *Daily Telegraph*

Fan Mail

Compiled by Rick Blaskey in aid of the Stars Organisation for Spastics

(Quartet Books, £4.95)

Fan mail, as I discovered from this book, is unpredictable. It is not just compliments, protestations of undying love, or even criticisms.

Stars are brought into the family circle to share problems large and small and to find solutions. Some of the letters make you laugh; others make you want to cry.

All the different kinds are collected here, representing contributions from many stars,

Dear Mr Dettol

Our teacher says that
French people eat frogs legs
and snails but I can't believe
you ever get that hungry.
If it is true, please will you
call at our house as we
have a lot in our garden
that my daddy doesn't
want.

love Paul Martin

aged 7 1/2

A letter to Sacha Distel.

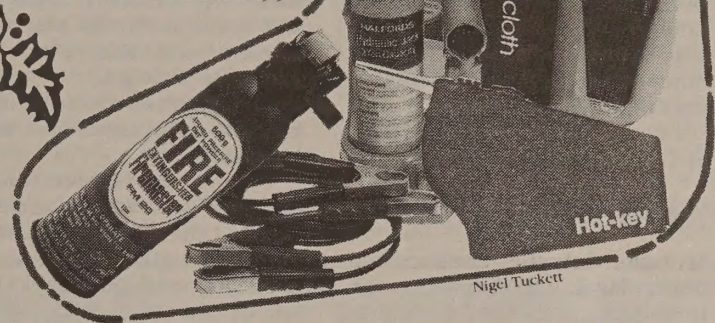
among them Barry Manilow, Elton John, Mick Jagger, Sylvia Syms, Eamonn Andrews and John Lennon. There is even, as David Jacobs admits in his for-

John Byworth's Christmas stocking

Christmas is a time when all drivers would like to find something for the car in their stockings. And although some of my suggestions are more suitable for a heavy-duty pillowcase, I'm sure they will make your disabled friends feel more secure and independent in their car.

Holts Tyre Weld instantly inflates and seals a punctured tyre and will keep you mobile until you can reach a garage. Essential if you physically cannot change a punctured tyre. £2.99

The Metro "Black" Collection has a slide-action licence holder, an ice-scraper and a synthetic cloth in a "stay damp" container. It is ideal for winter and can be removed with one hand. £2.99



Motoring

Halfords Heavy Duty Booster Cables for domestic cars or light commercial use are essential for an automatic car which cannot be pushed to get it started. £5.99

The Firemaster FM20 Fire Extinguisher, with mounting bracket, is compulsory on government-supplied cars, and necessary for private cars. £6.99

The Paddy Hopkirk Standard Petrol Can looks cheerful and has a 10 litre capacity. 50 per cent of all breakdowns are caused by lack of petrol. £5.99

Hot key is the original motorists torch from Finland that also thaws locks fast. Anyone in a wheelchair shouldn't be without one. £1.99 (batteries extra).

Halford's Hydraulic Bottle Jack is suitable for most cars and light vans and requires considerably less effort than the one supplied with the car. £6.95

A Wheel Nut Wrench is a 4-arm wrench which again requires less effort than the one usually supplied. £2.50

I have deliberately kept prices low this year, but if anyone wants to know what to buy me, then the Audioline 416 Combined Unit Stereo radio/cassette with all the trimmings at £119.95 will do me nicely. Happy Xmas!

All products are in the Halfords Christmas Gift Guide, and most of them should be available at good motorist accessory shops.

Films

Annie's Coming Out

Annie's Coming Out is frighteningly believable, not only because it is beautifully acted, but because so many of us could have been cooped up in Annie's cot. Certainly I could have been. Joey Deakon was.

The film comes from Australia and is about a 14 year-old atheist girl, who is found by a young teacher, Jessica, in a large subnormality hospital.

Jessica starts work with the idea that she can provide play therapy for those mentally handicapped children who might benefit from stimulation. As she is going around collecting children for her play group, she comes across Annie who is lying so uncomfortably that Jessica picks her up just to settle the child better on her mat. Even then she notices a response, and adds her to the play group.

The film follows Jessica's realisation that this child is not just intelligent but a highly intelligent and determined person who is aware that she is cooped up in a hospital which has become a prison.

It tells of her fight to make the hospital authorities, the child's parents, even her own boyfriend, recognise Annie's intelligence and Annie's wish to come out and live in the community.

Eventually this is achieved, by fighting a writ of *habeas corpus*.

The film is disturbing. The very first scene shows cots jammed together in sets of 4, like crates of veal calves. And the sense of shock grows when we are told the children are put to bed at 4 pm and left until 8 am.

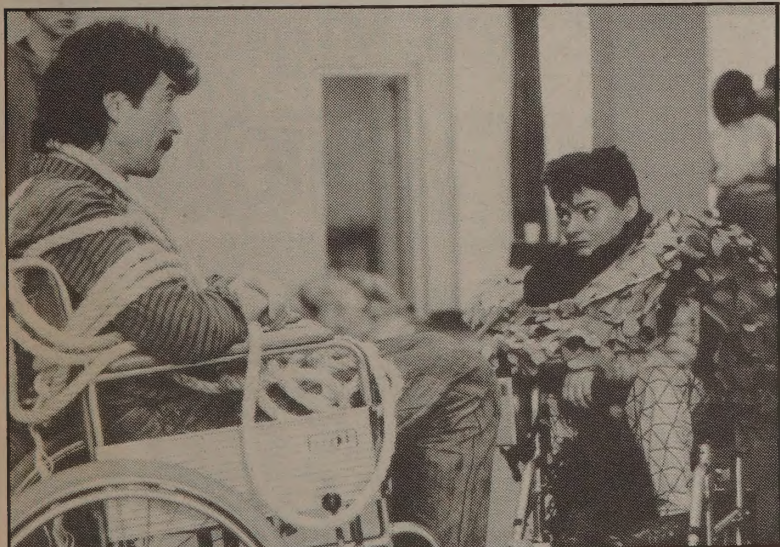
We cannot comfort ourselves that this is fiction - it is not - or that it could not happen here - it has. True, children are now being taken out of long-stay hospitals, but Maureen Osborn wrote a book documenting similar conditions in England in 1978. And what of the adults still in hospital who have been there all their lives?

We cannot comfort ourselves that no intelligent person would now go into such a hospital by mistake. Mistakes, I believe, are still possible.

In any case, this film graphically demonstrates conditions which are acceptable for no human being, whatever the degree of mental handicap.

Valerie Lang

Annie's Coming Out is at the Classic Chelsea and Classic Tottenham Court Road.



Spinning a yarn. Writer Noel Greig and actress Elly Wilkie rehearse a scene for the Half Moon Young People's Theatre's new production - their first jointly devised and presented by able-bodied and disabled professional actors. The cast includes 3 actresses who have worked with Graeae Theatre Company. Director Nic Fine was with Graeae for 2 years. The play is a series of dramatised stories about a piece of cloth moving through different sections of society. "It is about practical and symbolic values," says Tessa Panter, project co-ordinator. "It incorporates ideas about the values put on human beings in society." *Spinning a Yarn* will tour London from 10-22 December, and the company hope there will be further performances in 1985. Information from Jenny Clarke at the Half Moon Theatre. Tel: 01-791 1141

Large print books

Isis large print books has its first 5 titles available, including *The Honorary Consul* by Graham Greene, *Margaret Rutherford* by Dawn Langley Simmons and *Love in a Cold Climate* by Nancy Mitford. 5 more are to be launched in December.

For the new catalogue, contact Veronica Babington Smith or Lyndsay Williams, ISIS Large Print, 55 St Thomas Street, Oxford. Tel: (0865) 250333.

Don't forget!

Disabled: an illustrated manual of help and self help, specially priced at £6.95 plus postage, would make a good Christmas present for a disabled person or a student in the field. For every copy sold, the publishers David & Charles will contribute £2.31 to The Society. Send your cheque for £8 to the Librarian, The Spastics Society.

WRITE ANGLES

"This selection has created a high standard that will be hard to surpass" **Jeffrey Archer**, bestselling author of *Kane and Abel*.

An impressive new anthology of poetry and prose collected from winning entries in The Spastics Society's Literary Contest for people with disabilities. The book contains work of high quality by both children and adults, and in its attractive cover is the ideal Christmas gift for people of all ages...

"Quite a few pieces are excellent"
Rosalie Wilkins, presenter of ITV's Link programme.

ORDER YOUR COPY NOW

from the Librarian, the Library Bookshop, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ or from your local bookshop.

Write Angles is published by Hodder & Stoughton at £3.50 (plus 50p postage and packing).

All proceeds go to The Spastics Society



Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

Christmas is the time of year when families and friends get together to celebrate, exchange gifts and enjoy themselves. Yet many people are very isolated, and mobility problems and lack of money can exacerbate their loneliness.

The following letters highlight some of the problems.

A great deal depends, however, on the willingness of neighbours and local friends to provide transport and offer hospitality. I do hope that at this season of goodwill readers will be especially aware of all those living in their area who are housebound or lonely. The offer of a trip out in the car or a meal away from home can mean a great deal to those who cannot get out easily.

A very happy Christmas to everyone!

Doldrums at home

"This letter is really a cry for help and as you will see from my address I live in a rural area with no facilities for the disabled, or if there are any I have not heard of them.

The help that I seek is how to extract myself from the doldrums of being stuck in the house with no money.

I receive no benefit as my wife is working and earns more than Supplementary Benefit. And what is more, because I do not qualify for Supplementary Benefit I cannot claim for any spectacles or dental work, both of which I need.

I do not fall into one of the categories that is given media coverage and I wonder how many people there are whose disability was caused by 'injury by process', through an accident at work?"

It really is quite difficult to know what social activities to suggest for you in such a remote area and it must indeed be a problem to get out and about when you do not receive an allowance of

your own.

I do hope that you are receiving all the services and benefits to which you are entitled and I wonder if you have discussed your needs with a Welfare Rights Officer or been in touch with one of the DIAL offices?

I expect there will be a county organisation for disabled people in your area and the Social Services Department or Citizens' Advice Bureau will be able to give you details.

You do not say what your interests and hobbies are, but it occurred to me that local people with similar interests may be able to offer you transport or help you to get to a club or activity. Have you thought of going to a class run by the Adult Education Department or the Workers' Education Association? I realise that the nearest centre may be miles away, but it's worth making enquiries.

I do hope that things will pick up for you in 1985.

Alone and epileptic

"I have been a reasonably controlled epileptic for much of my life and for nearly 15 of these, in fact until the last 2 years, I have also suffered from agoraphobia. I just go a few yards to the doctor's and three shops and I never get invited to any of the activities that take place.

I am a widow and also registered as disabled. But with only a small widow's pension and no Mobility Allowance - I was refused - I cannot go very far.

I hardly open the door, and for nearly 15 years I have had not even a short break away. I have only been on a train once and never on a bus or coach.

I have been refused entry to a cafe, because they knew about my epilepsy. I cannot afford to buy books to help me, so I am left on my own,



with a stray cat for company.

Please, is there any way of helping me?

P.S. Since writing my first letter to you I have re-applied for the Mobility Allowance and this time it has been agreed."

I do appreciate how lonely and restricted you must feel at times, though I am sure that there will be some local clubs and social activities that would interest you and where you would be welcome.

Is there a branch of the British Epilepsy Association in your area I wonder?

Your Social Services Department will be able to give you details of other local organisations and I am sending you some additional information which I hope will be of assistance to you.

It is good to know that you are getting out and about more these days and I am sure that the extra money for mobility will be a great help to you. Who knows, you may be able to go on a coach or bus trip, perhaps with a friend or neighbour, and what about a holiday in one of the special hotels for people with disabilities?

Best of luck with your enquiries and thank you for writing to us.

DIAL (UK) Dial House, 117 High Street, Clay Cross, Derbyshire. Tel: 0246-864498

Disability Alliance, 25 Denmark Street, London WC2H 9NJ. Tel: 01-240 0806

British Epilepsy Association, Crowthorne House, New Wokingham Road, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 32AY. Tel: 0344-773122

CLASSIFIED

SITUATIONS VACANT. One disabled person living in the Birmingham/Midlands area and one disabled person living in the London area wanted to take telephone messages in his/her own home on behalf of a company involved in the motor trade. Must have good telephone manner and preferably a knowledge and interest in motor cars. Hours and wages to be arranged. Please write to Box No. 116. *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? If anyone knows the whereabouts of my relatives, Tom and Cary Cook, late of 28 Foxglove Close, Witham, Essex - well known for their work with cp people - please send their new address to Box No. 117, *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

PENFRIEND/TAPE-FRIEND required for 40 year-old, recently widowed, outgoing, handicapped woman living in West Yorkshire. Preferably 35/45 years, male or female. Reply to Mrs P Kelly, 11 Clifford Court, Pildacre Lane, Ossett, West Yorkshire.

BATRICAR FOR SALE with lights and indicators. Complete with charger. In exceptional condition. Sunshine yellow. Bargain at £600. Please phone (0993) 73220.

As from January, we shall be charging for all classified advertisements except personal (eg penfriends). The rate will be £1.50 a line (5 words) minimum £6. Box number (allow 3 words) £1.50 extra. For personal ads please telephone Kathy Johnson, 01-636 5020 ext. 245. For all other ads telephone Don Neal, 01-403 3115.

Stephen Quayle

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory

The Treatment of Children's Feet is a course for doctors, physiotherapists and accompanying helpers, especially concerned with cerebral palsied children. 25-27 January. Tuition £38, residence £36.

Recent Developments in the Makaton Vocabulary is a workshop for experienced staff at all levels which covers Makaton Symbols, Makaton in the curriculum, reading with Makaton and the use of Makaton with microcomputers. 1-3 February. Tuition £38, residence £36.

Social and Educational Problems Facing Young People with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus is for staff of all disciplines in mainstream, special or further education. It is particularly concerned with the period from the teens to young adulthood. 7-10 February. Tuition £40, residence £54.

Housing and Residential Accommodation for People with Disabilities is a practical course for architects, occupational therapists and administrators. 13-15 February. Tuition £64, residence £36.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: 0491 37551

Conferences and leisure

The Stars Organisation for Spastics' Christmas Concerts will be at the Royal Festival Hall on 8 December. There are performances at 4pm and 7.30pm. They feature Vera Lynn, Tim Rice, Elaine Page, Susan Hampshire, 2 choirs of 250 voices and a steel band. Tickets, priced from £2.50 to £7.50, are available from the Royal Festival Hall box office. Tel: 01-928 3002

New Developments in Technology for Disabled Children on 8 December includes an exhibition of technical aids and equipment for physically handicapped and multiply disabled children, and four speakers including Judy Denziloe of ACTIVE and Roger Jefcoate, consultant in technical aids for disabled people. Fees: professionals £7, voluntary workers, students, disabled people and their relatives £6, ACTIVE members £5, families £8. Contact Mr G Handley, Marjorie McClure School, Hawkwood Lane, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5PS. Tel: 01-467 0174

Care of Elderly and Disabled People is an exhibition by companies supplying aids and appliances to nursing homes, clinics and individuals. It has the support of the Registered Nursing Home Association and there will be advice available on property, house conversions and extensions, finance and leasing. It will be held at the Brighton Centre, 14-15 February 1985. Further information from Boardman Dunbar and Associates, PO Box 13, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 1YE. Tel: (0243) 828290

The Society's sports events

- 16 December **South East Swimming Gala**, St John's Pool, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Starts 2 pm.
- 20 January **South West Swimming Gala**, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, Exeter. Starts 2 pm.
- 2-3 February **International football squad training weekend** at Blackpool. Anyone interested should contact the Sport and Recreation Department.
- 9 March **North East Training Day** (athletics) at Cedars School, Newcastle.
- 10 March **Midlands Regional Training Day** (athletics) at Trent Polytechnic.
- 31 March **Invitation International**, West Germany v England, (athletics, swimming, soccer) at Crawley, Sussex (provisional).

For further information, contact the Society's Sport and Recreation Department, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ, tel: 01-387 9571.

OBITUARY

Paul Strangman Cadbury, President of the Midland Spastic Association and for many years Managing Director of Cadbury Bros Ltd, died on 24 October.

Few of those involved in the care of spastic people today are probably aware of the vital role Paul Cadbury (or PSC as we called him) played in setting up an organisation for spastic people in Britain.

During the early war years my wife and I searched the country for advice and help for our severely disabled son. We had no success, but a friend recognised the symptoms and put us onto a physiotherapist from Carshalton Hospital who had visited the USA.

She had found they were years ahead of us in the care and treatment of people with cerebral palsy. We also heard of Dr Earl Carlson in New York, who had cerebral palsy himself and had become a specialist in his own complaint.

Not long after, I got in touch with the Cadburys as I heard they had a daughter who was spastic. When we first visited Mrs Cadbury said "We will weigh in on this problem." Little did we realise what would happen and how soon!

Within a few days PSC visited New York and met Dr Carlson.

Paul Cadbury

He arranged for him to tour Britain, addressing and conferring with doctors and educationalists.

This was a huge success and resulted in a working party being established to draw up a constitution for a new society.

Thus was launched The British Council for the Welfare of Spastics. Henry Weston was secretary and I was chairman. After a number of years this became The Spastics Society.

Within the framework of BCWS we also set up the Midland Spastic Association as a regional body, with PSC as head. His first objective was to set up a model day school for spastic people in Birmingham. The school was named after Dr Carlson who came over for the opening.

A welfare department followed, which has developed over the years and given great satisfaction to spastic people.

Paul Cadbury was a true pioneer and it has been a rare privilege to have known and worked with a man of such stature and vision.

The work that he helped to get started has enriched the lives of thousands of spastic people and leaves a heritage for those of the future.

STREAMLINER

FROM

NEWTON

An ideal second wheel-chair for people who like to travel in style. At only 16 inches wide the Streamliner copes well with narrow spaces on trains, aeroplanes, ships and caravans, and when its wheels are removed it weighs a mere 22lbs and folds away to only 5 inches wide. Modifications just introduced are forward brakes and swinging arm rests.

NEWTON
Meadway Works
Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B33 0SQ
Telephone 021 783 6081

NEWTON

SERVICES TO DISABLED PEOPLE FROM THE SPASTICS SOCIETY



Betty Howarth keeps the cash coming

When Jack Howarth (Albert Tatlock of *Coronation Street*) died last March, it was estimated that he had personally raised over £50,000 during his association with the Stars Organisation for Spastics.

Much of that money came from annual visits to the Pontins holiday camps where, in return for his autographed photograph, he invited holidaymakers to contribute what they could to the

SOS cause.

This year his widow, Betty, who had always accompanied him, went it alone. Through late August and early September she visited 16 camps, in Devonshire and Somerset, Wales, Lancashire and around Lowestoft.

Holding the rest of Jack's autographed cards (he had always kept ahead of demand) and with pint pots ready as usual for the contributions, Betty told her

audiences how this year she was proud to be collecting for SOS's fourth venture, a residential centre for teenagers in Oxford called Jack Howarth House.

Altogether she raised £2,076. "I was rather disappointed," she said modestly. "Jack always collected a lot more."

At the AGM she was able to bring along another £700. This was the contents of a deposit account into which he paid small sums collected from grateful autograph hunters all over the world.

Betty's tour of the Pontins camps was not without adventure. Returning from Lowestoft, she found herself on a train on Bank Holiday Monday. There were no seats free.

"In desperation I got into the luggage van," she said. "I sat on the floor from 10.30 in the morning till 3.30 in the afternoon when we arrived at Nuneaton. By then there were 24 suitcases and bits of baggage in the van, 7 bicycles and 25 people, 3 of them in wheelchairs."

"And it was boiling hot!" she said cheerfully.

Betty will visit the camps again next year.



Pint pots at the ready, Betty and Jack collecting money.



Breakout without breaking the rules. 11 gangs of "desperate" men broke out of Strangeways Prison, Manchester on 19 October, causing a few raised eyebrows but no raised alarms. The second Sponsored Jailbreak, organised by Louise Silburn of the North-West Region, raised £1,500. Each team was sponsored to get as far away as possible from the prison gates in 12 hours without spending any money. One team travelled 4,500 miles, "stowing away" on a plane to Minorca, flying back to Birmingham and then taking off to Malaga. Leader of the team, Dave Dillnutt, a police constable at Manchester Airport, was "arrested" by his colleagues as he got off the plane in Manchester!

PEOPLE

Margaret Murray



Angus Reid is now Deputy to John Cox, the Director.

As he says himself, this does not involve any great change of role from his former job as Director of Finance.

"I am still responsible for the Finance Division but I have taken on the additional responsibility of deputising for the Director and acting as someone to turn to in his absence," he said.

"I have also taken on a coordinating role in the development of long-term planning," he added.

Responsibility for the Personnel Division has been taken over by Mrs Jill Carne.

Douglas Skinner is the new Social Work Co-ordinator responsible for the West Country, Mid Wales and South Wales.

Based in Bristol, he will be supervising the area's social work team, looking at demands and deciding on priorities.

"My responsibilities are immense," he says. "There's so much to be done in terms of improving services - both social worker to client services and general facilities for the community."

Before coming to the Society Douglas Skinner, aged 46, was a senior social worker in the Central Region of Scotland.

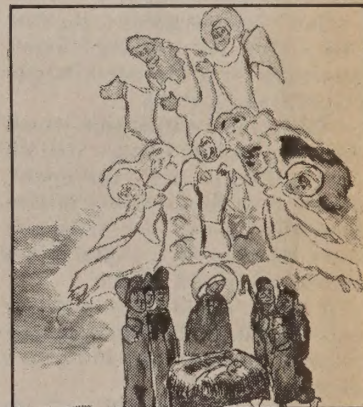


Lenny Patterson

And the winner is... Alfred Marks delves deep for a ticket (whilst dextrously balancing a cocktail sausage and a wine glass) at the draw for the SOS Raffle, which raised a magnificent £20,000. With him (from left to right) are John Goldcrown, Chairman of The Spastics Society's Marketing and Fundraising Committee, Dame Vera Lynn and Christopher Beeny. First prize, an Austin Metro, was won by Joyce Jones of South Norwood, London. The money goes to Jack Howarth House, the recently opened residential centre for teenagers in Oxford.

Sorry Toby!

Due to a printer's error, Toby Badham's Christmas card painting failed to appear on last month's back page. So here it is. Cards available from ICR, PO Box No 80, 16 St John's Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3NP.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Entries for The Spastics Society's 1985 Literary Contest are now welcome. It is open to all people with disabilities. There are cash prizes for both prose and poetry in adult and junior sections. The closing date is April 1985. For information and entry forms, send a stamped addressed envelope to Nina Heycock, Richard House, 30-32 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RA.

Countryside facilities for disabled people in Essex. For further information on the Birch Tree Estate, Colchester, please contact Mrs Cottrell, tel: 0206 330790, not Roger Paul as we said in the October issue.

Computer Applications in Social Work is a new quarterly journal produced by the Department of Sociology and Applied Social Studies at the City of Birmingham Polytechnic. It is aimed at a broad readership in social work and allied professions. Any news or information of disabled people using microcomputers will be gratefully received. Contact Stuart Toole. Tel: 021-356 6911 extension 303.

British Telecom Payphones Service has appointed a consultant to link with disabled people. She would like to obtain information from all disability

groups on their use of payphones, difficulties experienced in design/siting of payphones and suggestions which might be incorporated in new designs. Comments should be sent to Mrs A Smith, 114 The Boulevard, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5JG.

Disability Rights Handbook for 1985 has been published, with several changes in content and layout to make the information more accessible. Written for all people with disabilities, their families and advisors, it gives information on social security, homelessness, income tax and legal advice. Price £2.20 post free from the Disability Alliance, 25 Denmark Street, London WC2H 8NJ.

Would you like a talking newspaper?

As part of our research into putting *Disability Now* on tape, we need to know how many people would welcome this free service and which parts of the newspaper interest them most.

If you would like to receive *Disability Now* on tape, please fill in the coupon below and return it to the Circulation Supervisor, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

I would be interested to receive *Disability Now* on tape.

I am most interested in.....

Name.....

Address.....



Personnel affairs. The new team at the Personnel Department is (from left to right): Carol Warrilow, who started as the new Senior Personnel Officer for Education on 12 November. She was previously Personnel Officer for the South East Regional Health Authority. Patrick Spencer is Senior Personnel Officer for Social Services. Christine Mackness is Senior Personnel Officer for Park Crescent. And Jill Carne, previously Personnel Manager, is now Director of Personnel.

Mayor and bus give lift to disabled people

by Simon Crompton

The new Lord Mayor of London has announced his commitment to help disabled people get jobs. He has also started an appeal to build a skill centre for disabled 16-18 year-olds at the Lord Mayor Treloar School near Alton, Hampshire.

The Right Hon Sir Alan Traill, CBE, MA, was fulfilling his first public engagement on 14 November, when he launched the first bus in London to carry wheelchairs on a regular service.

The single-decker bus has an attendant-operated lift at the centre doors. It provides a once-weekly service to and from shopping centres in the London Boroughs of Newham and Waltham Forest.

"I hope we will see ahead to the day when there is not just a bus to take disabled people shopping," he said, "but also one to take them to work."

Keith Brown, London Regional Transport's board member with special responsibility for the disabled, said the bus is part of a new approach by LRT to the travel needs of disabled people.

"LRT has set up a small unit for disabled passengers to act as a focal point for all London Regional Transport's departments, outside organisations and representatives of disabled people," he said.

"I am in the process of meeting all the main organisations representing disabled people to learn at first hand about their problems and priorities."

The organisations include dial-a-rides, The Greater London Association for Disabled People (GLAD) and RADAR.

"Within the limitations which exist, we aim to ensure that all new vehicles and equipment, and new or altered bus or underground stations, are designed with the needs of the disabled in mind," said Keith Brown.

If there is sufficient funding and demand, LRT will consider putting similar buses in service elsewhere.

What is the reaction of GLAD



Alice Moira talks to the Lord Mayor.

in view of their transport report published last month?

"LRT now has a statutory obligation to consider disabled people," said a spokesman. "We hope that this unit has more punch than those set up by other large organisations."

"We welcome the new bus as a trial, but it must be seen as part of a programme and wider service," he added.

Alice Moira, Welfare Rights Social Worker at The Spastics Society, tried out the new bus at the launch.

"It's a brilliant idea," she said. "I just hope the service can be extended to do more than shopping. But whether people will be able to get to the bus stop is

another question."

"The only design problem I could see was that it was difficult to push a wheelchair over the safety bar at the front of the lift platform when it was folded down to let people on. A little ramp which folds up would be better."

"Because the bus is quite spacious and has a lift it should be useful not only to people in wheelchairs, but also to people who can walk but can't normally use a bus - like people with walking frames and mothers with double prams."

For further information on times and routes contact Forest District London Buses, tel: 01-518 0411.

Labour wants new income scheme

The Labour Party will introduce a comprehensive income scheme for disabled people if elected in 1987/8, said Alf Morris MP, Labour frontbench disability spokesman, speaking at the Labour Party's second Consultative Conference on Disability on 20 November.

"This would more fully meet the extra costs of disabled living," he said.

The Spastics Society put forward their own comprehensive income scheme in a Pre-Budget Submission to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1983. It would mean overhauling the present piecemeal benefits available to disabled people and implementing a coherent system.

The Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, also spoke at the Consultative Conference, to which organisations concerned with disability, including The Spastics Society, were invited.

Alf Morris reiterated Labour's commitment to implement legislation to end discrimination against disabled people.

Both Mr Kinnock and Mr Morris castigated government plans for rate-capping councils and squeezing social service spending still further.

A Labour government would "protect and expand local services for disabled people so that they can be part of, and not apart from, society," said Alf Morris.

All the participants, from Parliament and voluntary organisations agreed that political parties should consider disability as part of everything they discuss.

Top performance

Twelve teams of expert drivers, clocked up a total of 16,224 miles and £15,000 for The Spastics Society in just 24 hours.

The money bought the Widnes Spastics Fellowship Day Centre in Cheshire a Talbot Express minibus.

The Endurance Drive started on 2 November, and was run by the High Performance Club, which consists of drivers who have passed the British School of Motoring's most advanced driver training course.

Using performance cars donated by various companies, each team drove a circuit of Britain taking in racing tracks at Castle Comb, Oulton Park, Knockhill, Cadwell Park and Snetterton.

The drive was not a race, and money was raised through donations or sponsorship.

One of the teams, driving a Rover 3500, was from the Metropolitan Police. Another, driving a Bentley Mulsanne Turbo, was from Rolls Royce Motors.

And Jane Stewart Smith led an all women team from HPC.

Fred Cooper



John Cox gets the Metropolitan Police team underway.

Not such GLAD tidings

Between 300,000 and 400,000 people in London may be confined to their homes with no means of transport because they are disabled, says a new report.

Transport in London for People with Disabilities, published by the Greater London Association for the Disabled (price £3) concludes there is a large unmet need amongst disabled people who have no personal transport.

It recommends that transport for disabled people be made the responsibility of London Regional Transport, which should commit itself to the co-ordination

and development of existing services.

Initiatives by British Rail and London Transport such as redesigning the layout of handrails on buses and the introduction of moveable seats on trains, do represent an improvement for less disabled people, it says.

But a clear commitment should be made to make future transport systems more accessible from the outset. For example, buses should be developed with lifts or lowerable suspension.

GLAD has commissioned a follow-up transport study.



Brigid Armstrong and Bernard Sharpe of the Society's Legacies Department with Robin Skells in the art studio at Coombe Farm.

A date with flower-power

2,000 new calendars to adorn solicitors' offices have been produced by the Society's Legacies Department.

They feature a still-life painting by Robin Skells from the Coombe Farm Centre in Croydon.

"We chose the painting because it's the sort of tasteful picture solicitors would like to hang up," says Bernard Sharpe, Head of Legacies.

"The bottom of the calendar, which shows 3 months at a time, has been chosen because it is useful for conveyancing."

But though the Legacies Department were impressed with Robin Skells' flower painting, it isn't Robin's favourite. He prefers his portraits - especially those of Eric Morecambe and Paul McCartney.

★ The Legacies Department has also produced a booklet giving advice about making wills and forming trusts.

Your Child's Future - How to Prepare Wills and Trusts sets out to discuss some of the problems involved in deciding how to dispose of worldly goods.

It refers especially to the problems of those with disabled children or partners.

Available free from the Legacies Department, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent.

Warm thoughts...

Mrs Joyce Smith has received a set of gloves, scarf and hat in red Fair Isle from a seemingly anonymous admirer. She wishes to say how grateful she is for this lovely present.

World benefits

The "Benefits for Kids" poster, launched by The Spastics Society in September, is available in Urdu, Gujarati, Turkish and Punjabi.

The poster gives parents instant information on when they should apply for different benefits for their disabled child.

Available from Linda Avery, tel: 01-636 5020 ext. 205.

Disability Now

Published by The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

Editor Mary Wilkinson
Assistant Simon Crompton
Circulation Gwen Rose
Advertising Don E. Neal, Kingslea Press Ltd., Central Buildings, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1 1TY. Tel: 01-403 3115.

Typesetting by Foremost Typesetting Ltd., 56 Carter Lane, London EC4.

Printed by NewsWeb Ltd., Hastings (0424 52811) and 108 Temple Chambers, Temple Avenue, London EC4. Tel: 01-583 3190.

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